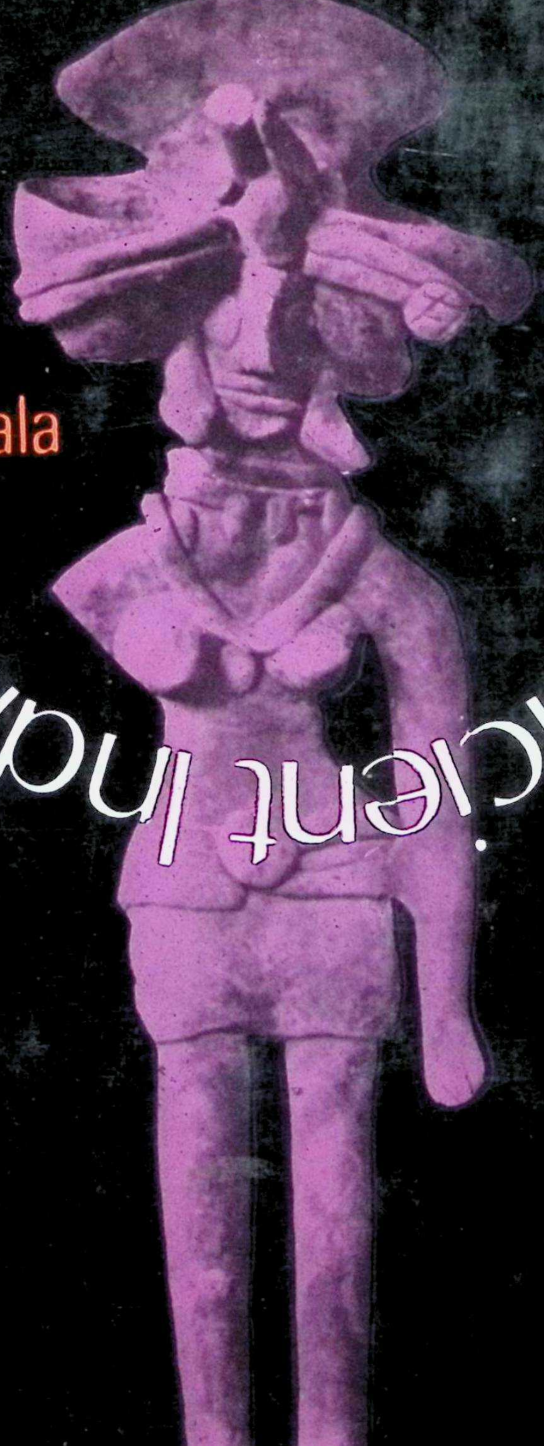
Goddesses in Ancient India

P K Agrawala



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Dr. Agrawala's present work largely represents his Ph.D. thesis (approved by the Banaras Hindu University) in a revised up-to-date form. He has brought out a most comprehensive and thorough analysis of the material on the worship of goddesses in the Protohistoric and Vedic periods of India. A vast amount of archaeological evidence is carefully sifted and analysed by him in a truer cultic perspective as throwing new light on the role of mother-goddesses in the protohistoric cultures ranging from small agricultural communities of Baluchistan foot-hills to the highly developed Harappan. Dr. Agrawala has also identified and discussed in a systematic manner varied motifs and concepts of fertility cultus in the Ṛgveda and later Vedic texts which were subsequently formulated into definite images, personifications and attributes. He has marshalled in a fully objective treatment all those references in the Vedic literature that go now to reveal numerous fresh aspects of this hitherto unexplored subject. One is able indeed to see through the present work how the Ṛgvedic goddesses, mostly abstractions, later on assumed mythical definitions in the pantheon and how the folk culture of India exercised its far-reaching influences on higher priestly religion not only by contributing its own share of goddesses but also through their more concrete identification with the already existing ones in myths and cult rituals.

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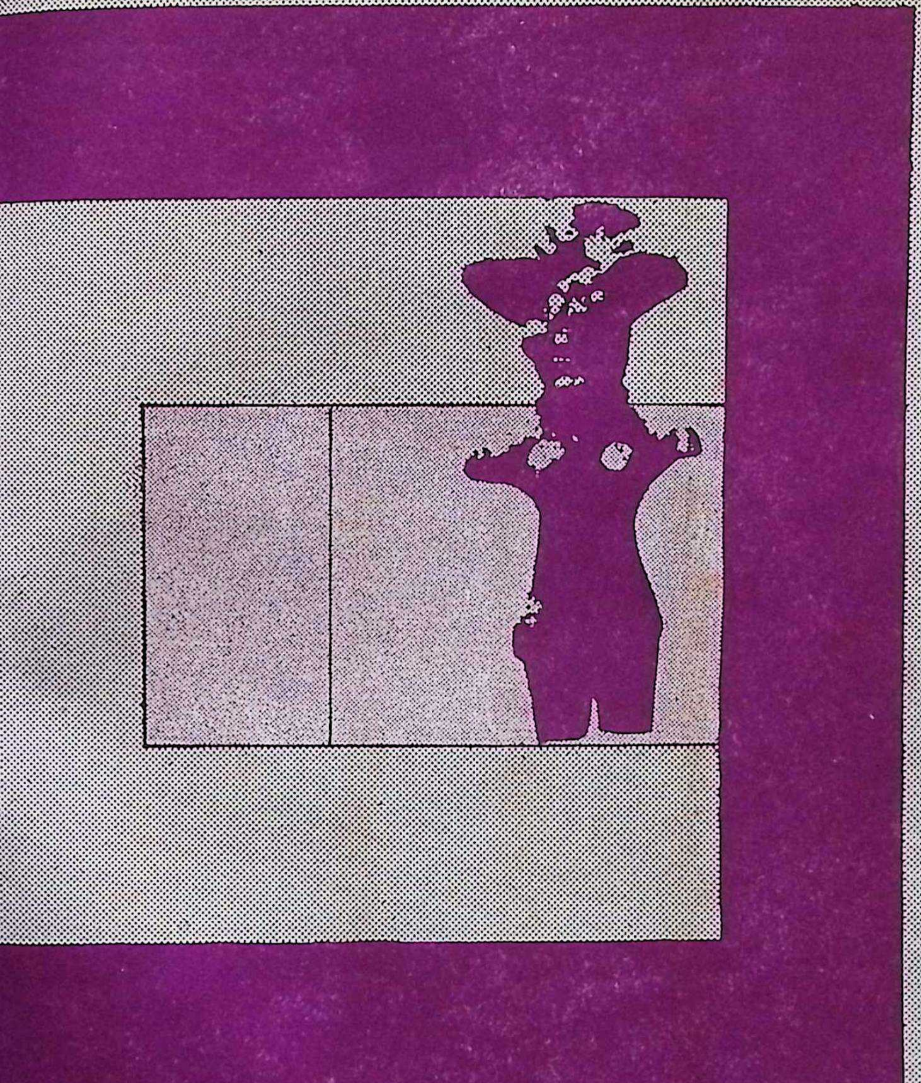

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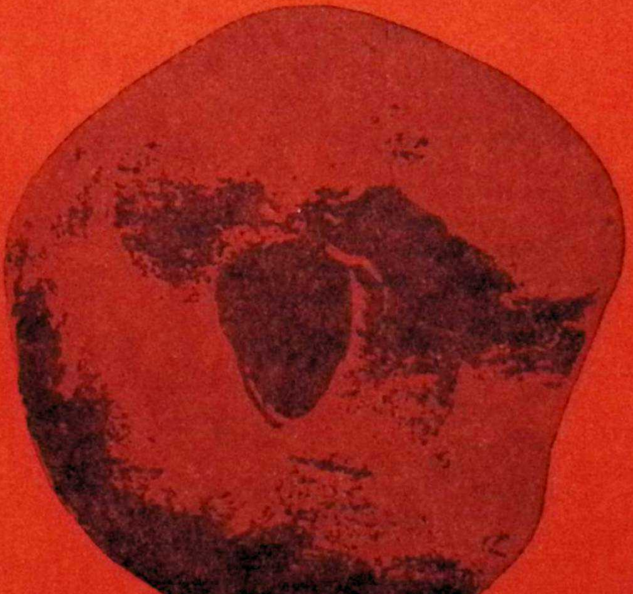

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PREFACE

The present work represents my Ph.D. thesis approved by the Banaras Hindu University in 1971 which I have taken liberty of slightly revising in view of some lately accumulated material. The present endeavour has aimed to make a study of the evidence available for the worship of goddesses in early India, particularly in the Protohistoric and Vedic periods. In the present state of our knowledge, we do not, however, have adequate evidence in the Indian sub-continent for knowing the antecedents of the goddess cult prior to the Chalcolithic relics of the Baluchistan peasant-communities and the Harappan civilisation, or of prehistoric Central Indian and Deccan. Therefore we have to fall back on the Palaeolithic and Neolithic evidence at our disposal in Europe, Western Asia, the Russian steppe and Iran to capitulate the preceding traditions, if any, for the probable links of Indian religions in the *common heritage* of early mankind. Thus taking cue in the introductory survey from this source material for pre-Chalcolithic phase of man's evolution to culture and religious thinking, we have attempted in the following pages to collect and interpret the early Indian evidence on the chosen problem from a more or less objective and analytical viewpoint.

I am extremely obliged to my teacher Professor A.K. Narain then of the Banaras Hindu University and now at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, U.S.A., under whose guidance and supervision the present study was carried out. Apart from the persistent encouragement and inspiration on his part, he has, throughout the prolonged undertaking of this work, been of immense help in critically undertaking the problem in its broader outlines and in carrying out its treatment in specific details.

The illustrations have been mostly taken from the published works, and to the respective authorities I express my gratefulness. I am also much obliged to my friend Shri O.P. Khaneja, photographer of the Department, for his able assistance. Lastly, I am to thank Shri Shakti Malik of the Abhinav Publications for undertaking this publication and giving it the present excellent shape.

Banaras Hindu University

Prithvi Kumar Agrawala

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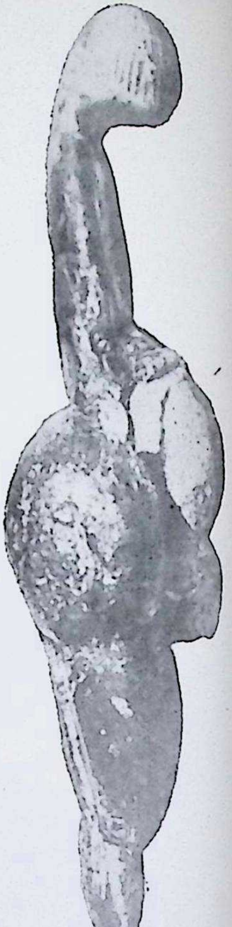
ABBREVIATIONS

AB	*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*
A or Ar.	Āraṇyaka
AV	*Atharvaveda*
Brāh. or Br.	Brāhmaṇa
GS	Gṛhyasūtra
RV	*Ṛgveda*
ŚB	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Mādhyandina Version
S or Saṁ.	Saṁhitā
ŚS	Śrautasūtra
TA	*Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*
TB	*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*
TS	*Taittirīya Saṁhitā*
VS	*Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*
ASI	Archaeological Survey of India
ASIAR	*Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report*
ERE	*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. by J. Hastings
IHQ	*Indian Historical Quarterly*
JBORS	*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Patna
JBRS	*Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Patna
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London
JUPHS	*Journal of the U.P. Historical Society*, Lucknow
SBE	Sacred Books of the East
MASI	Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India

ILLUSTRATIONS



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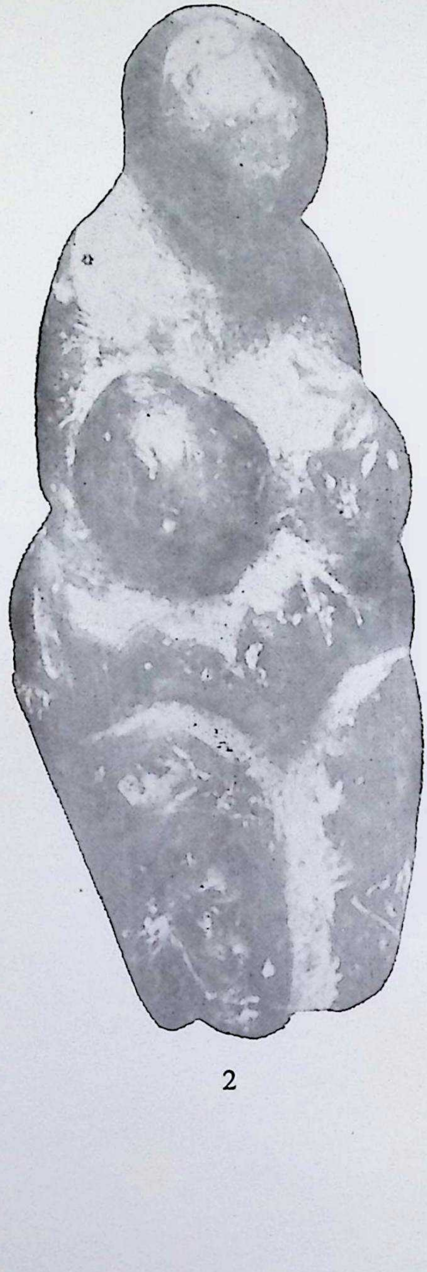

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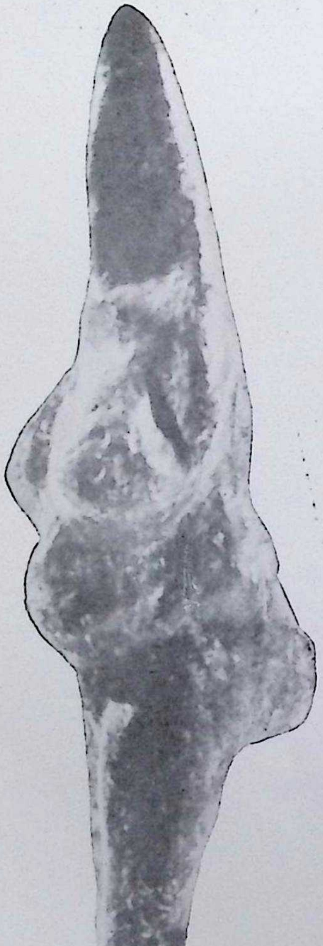

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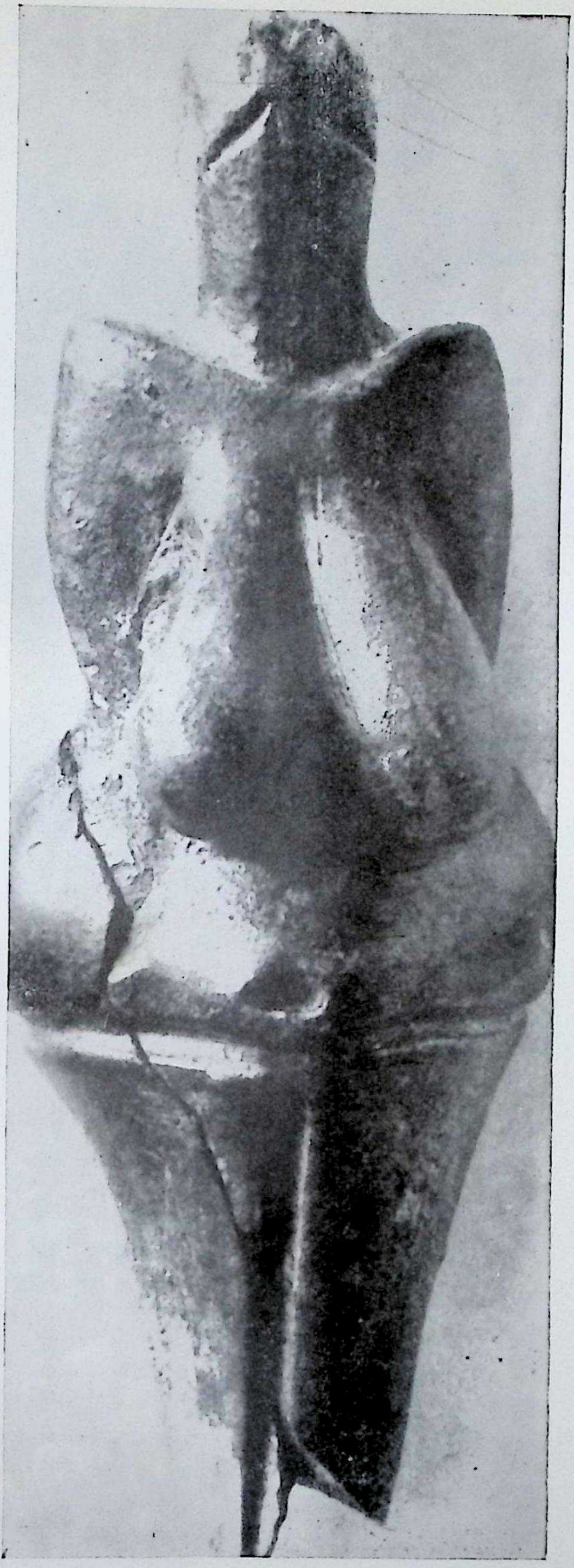

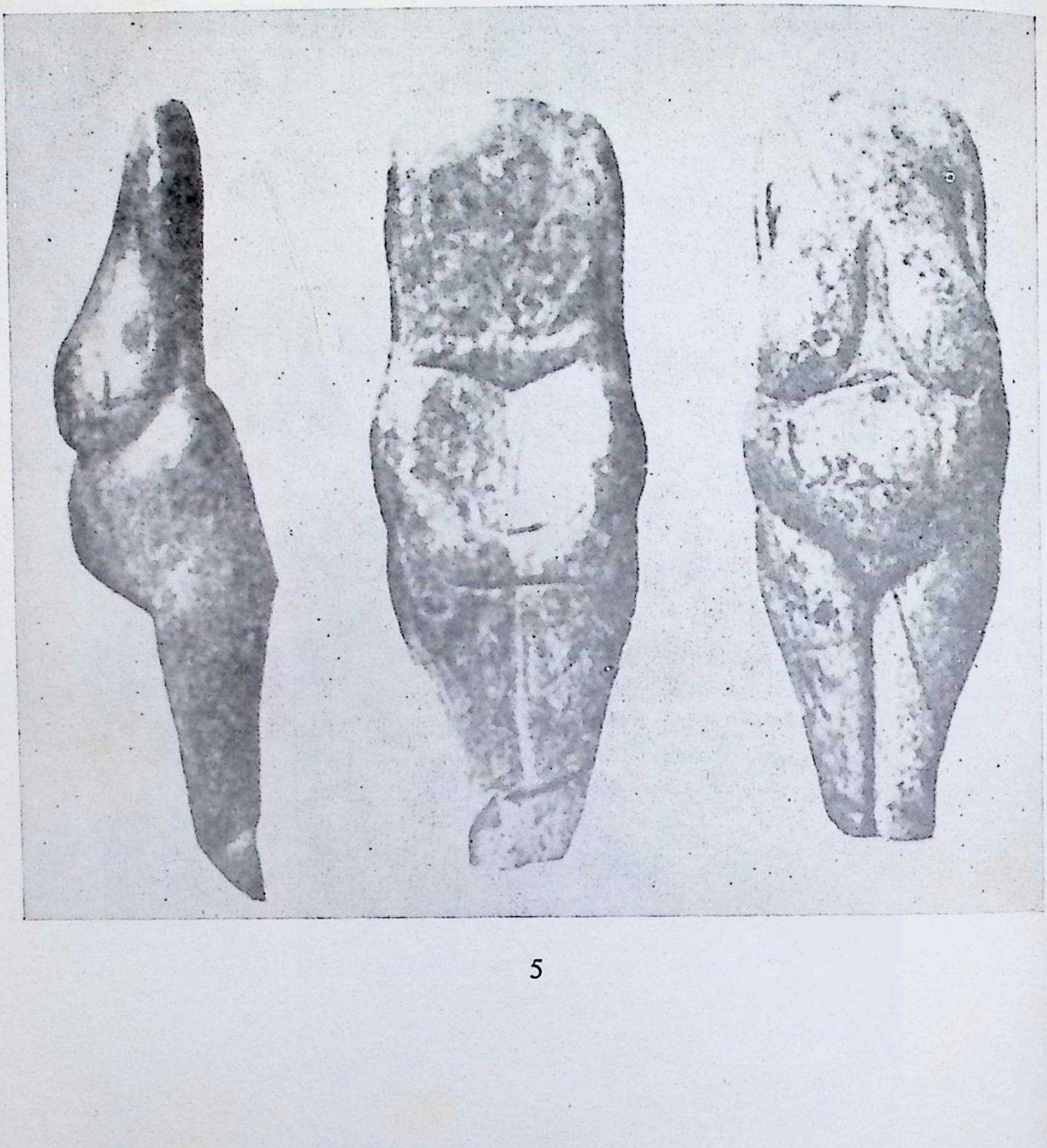

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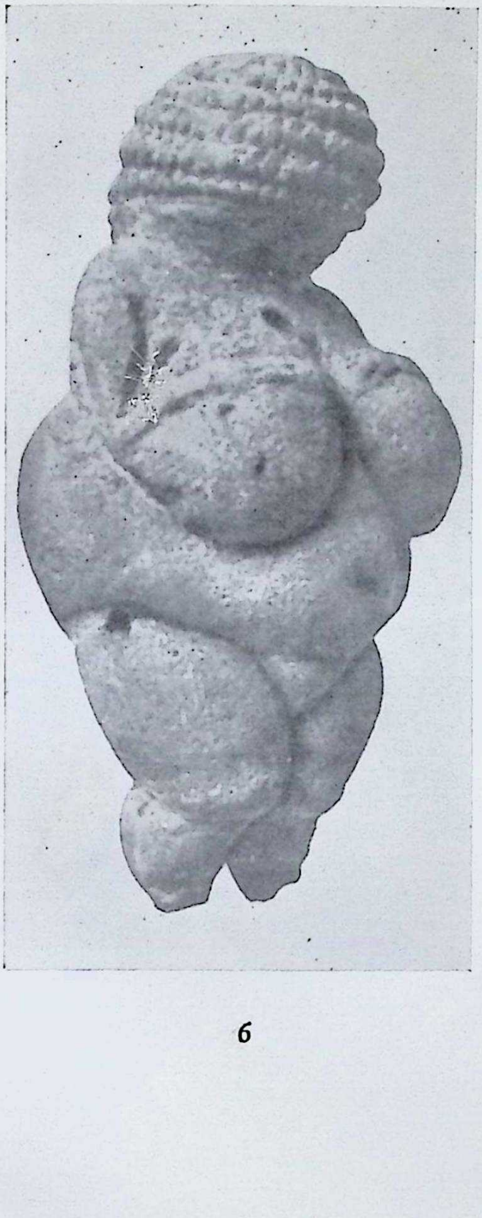

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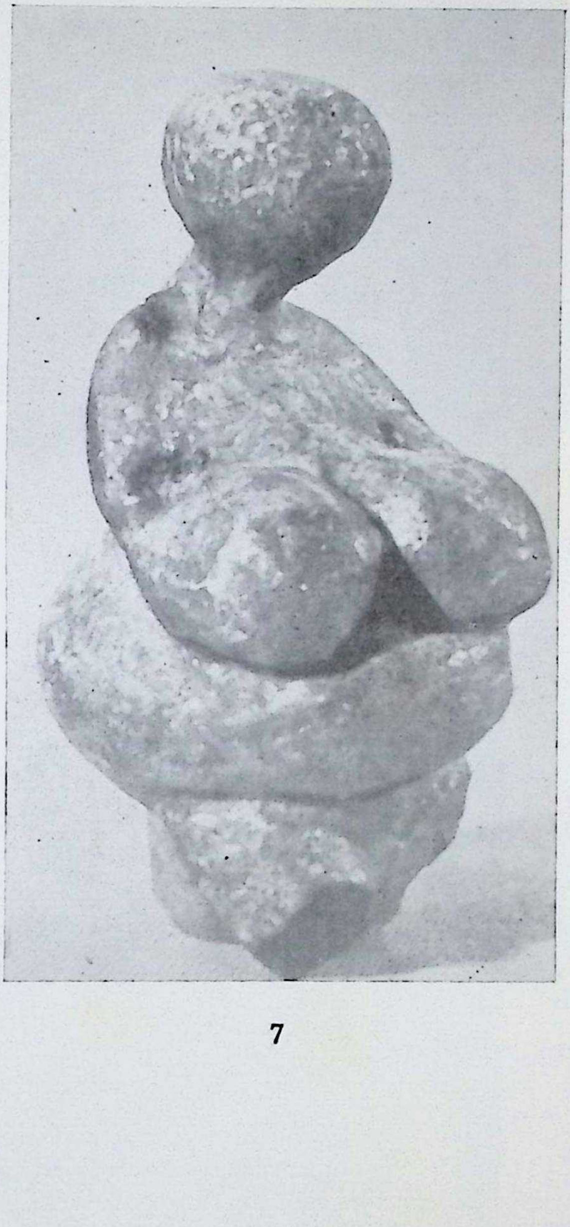

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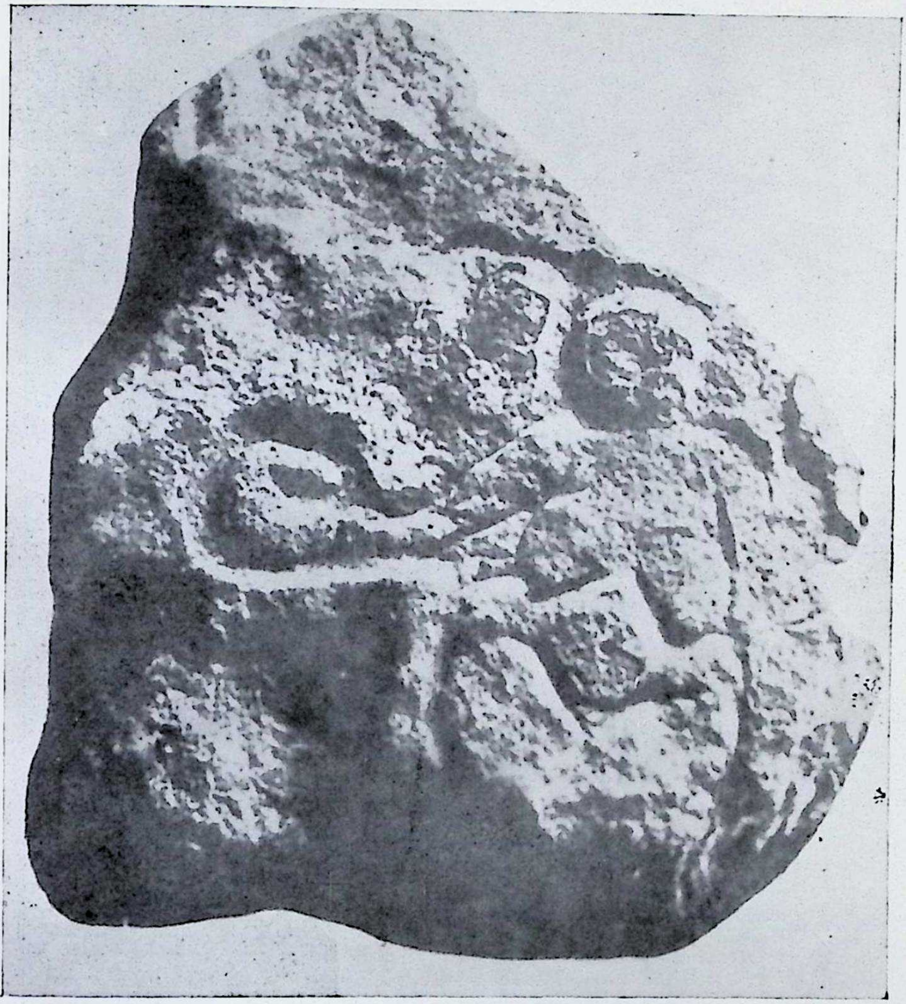

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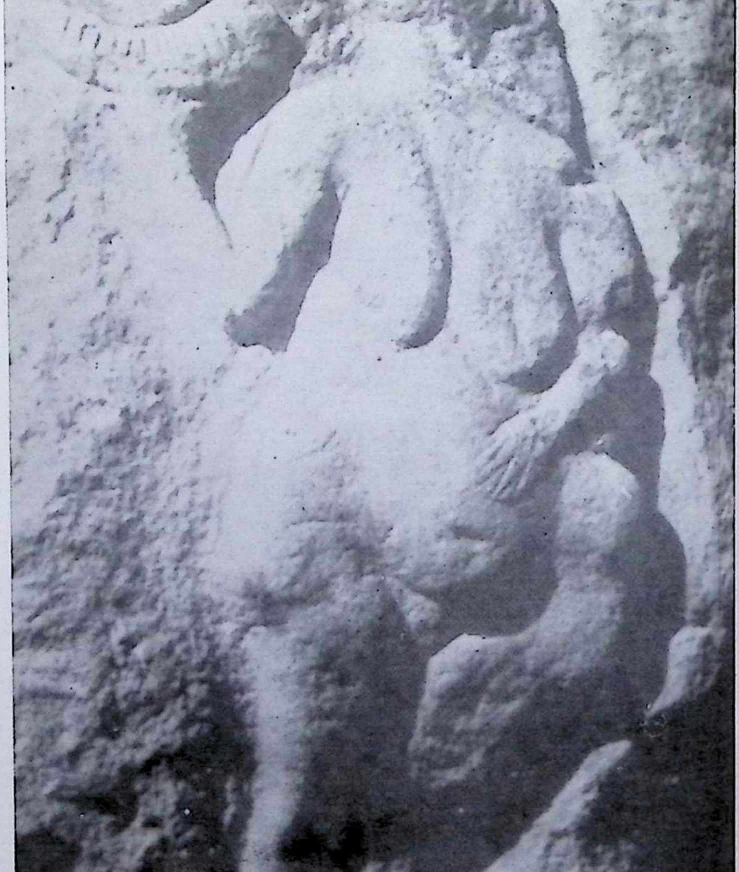

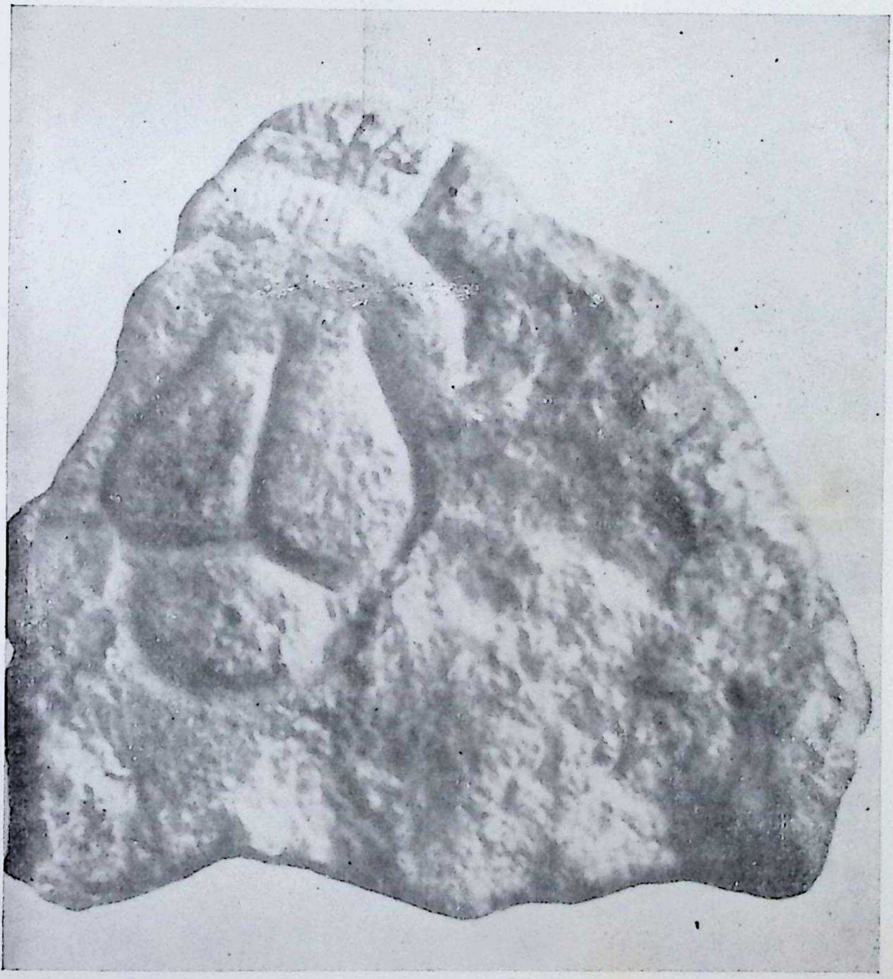

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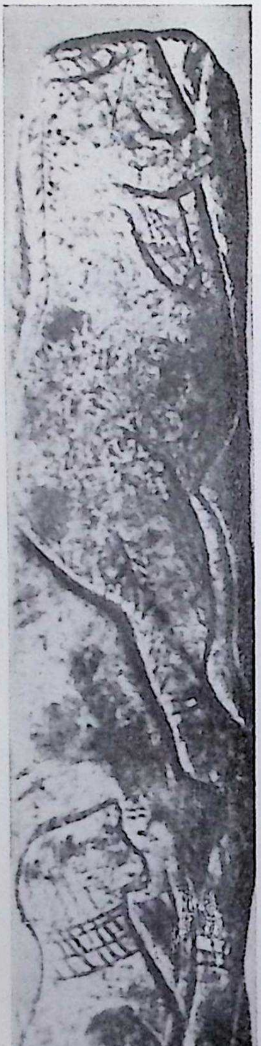

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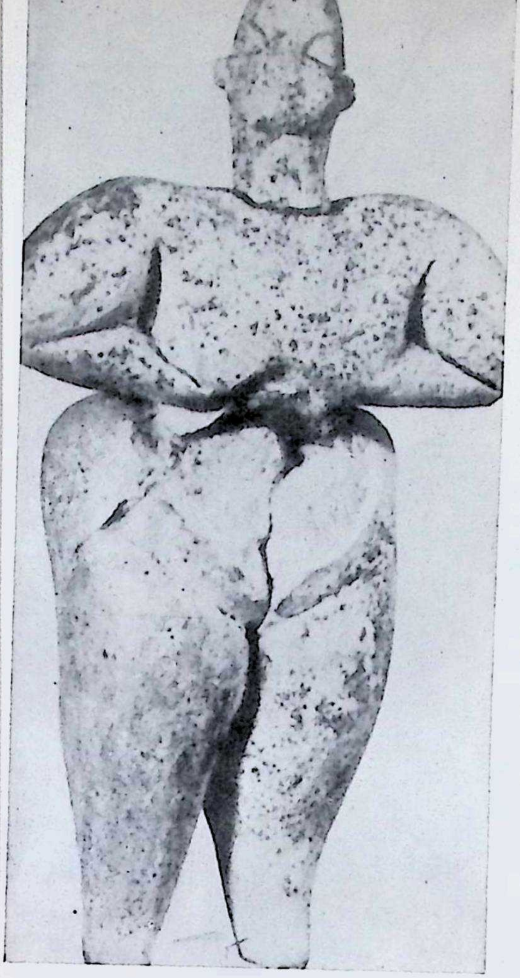

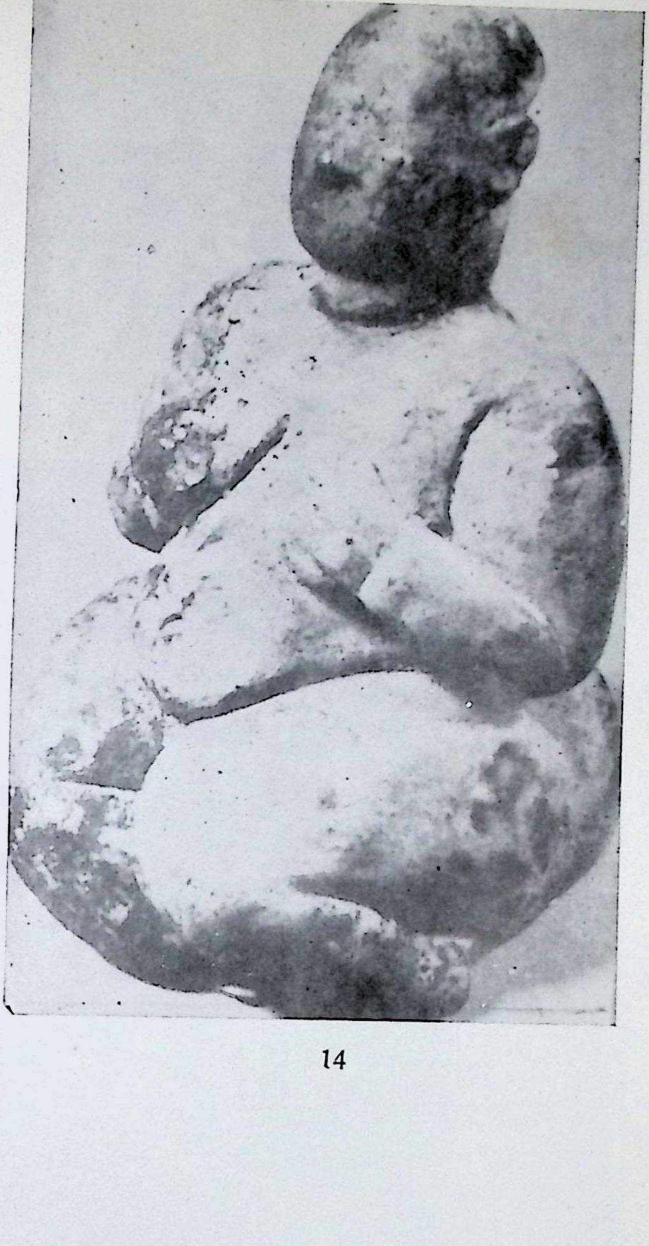

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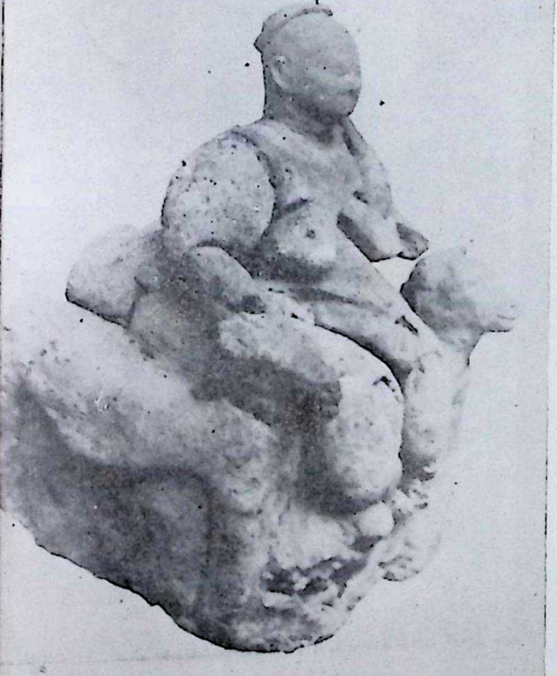

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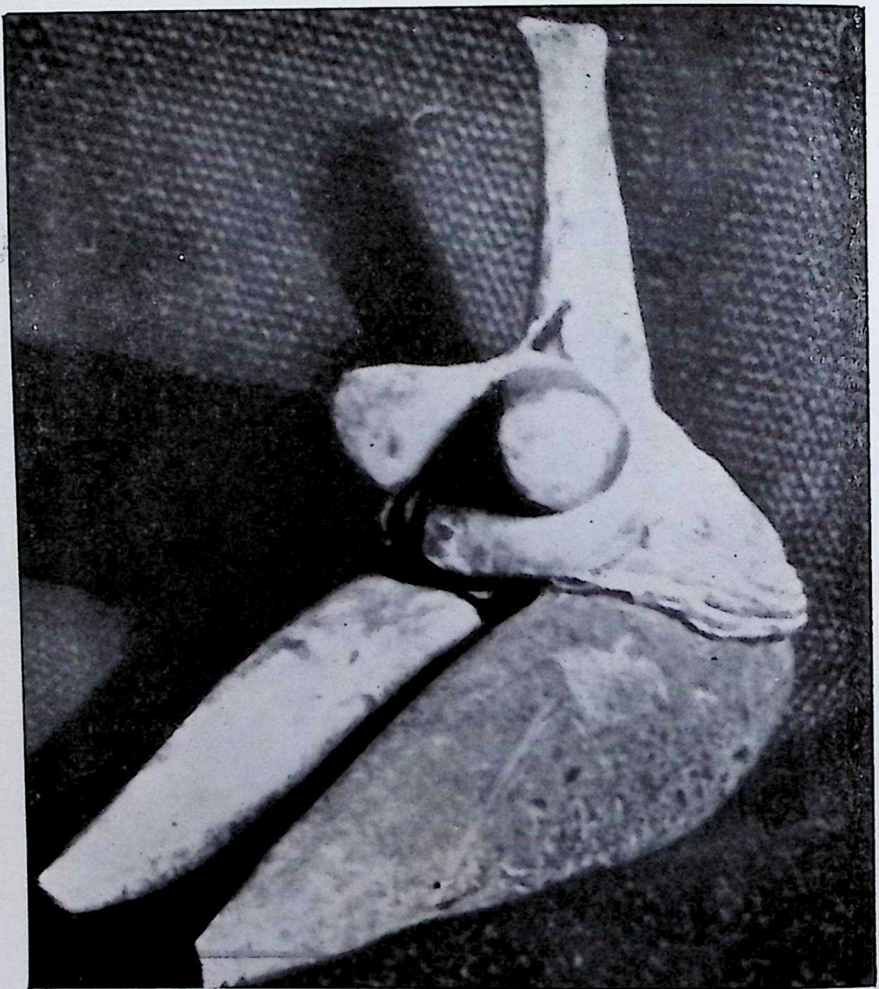

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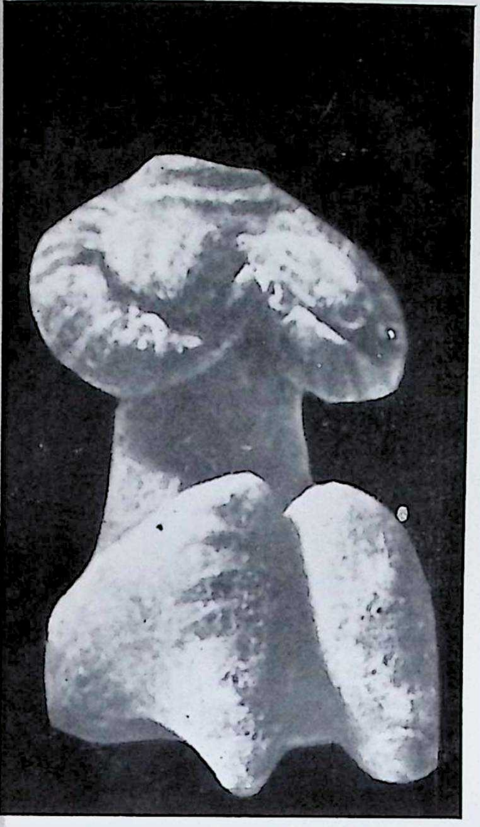

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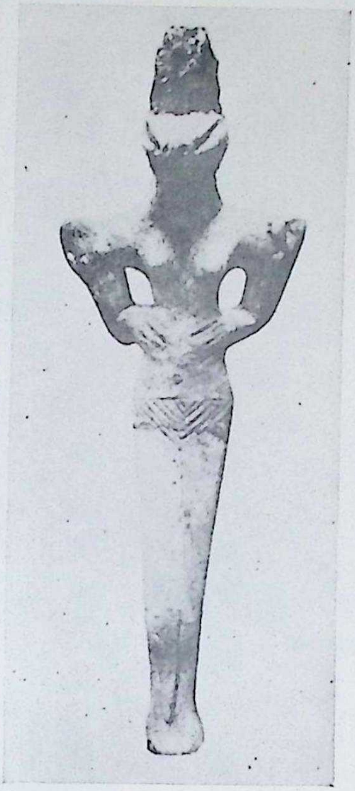

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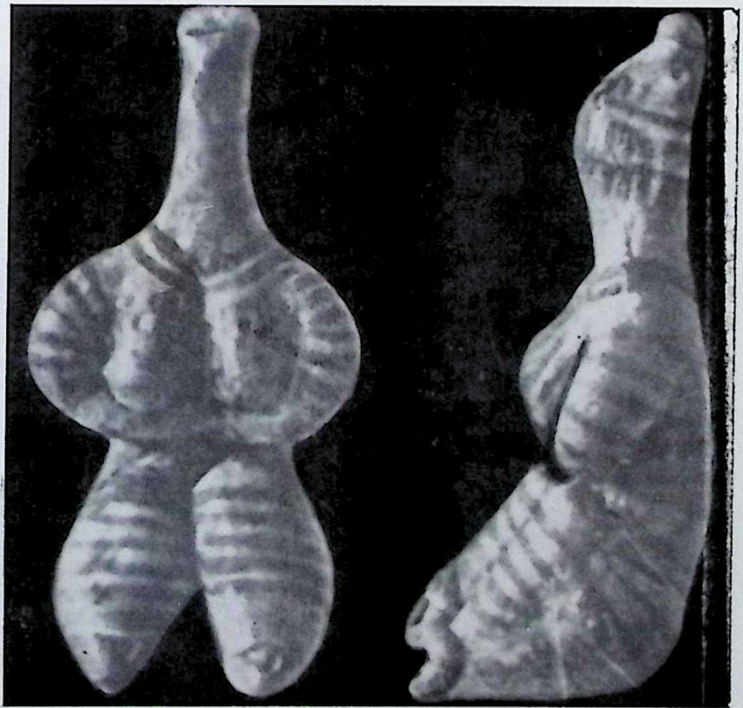

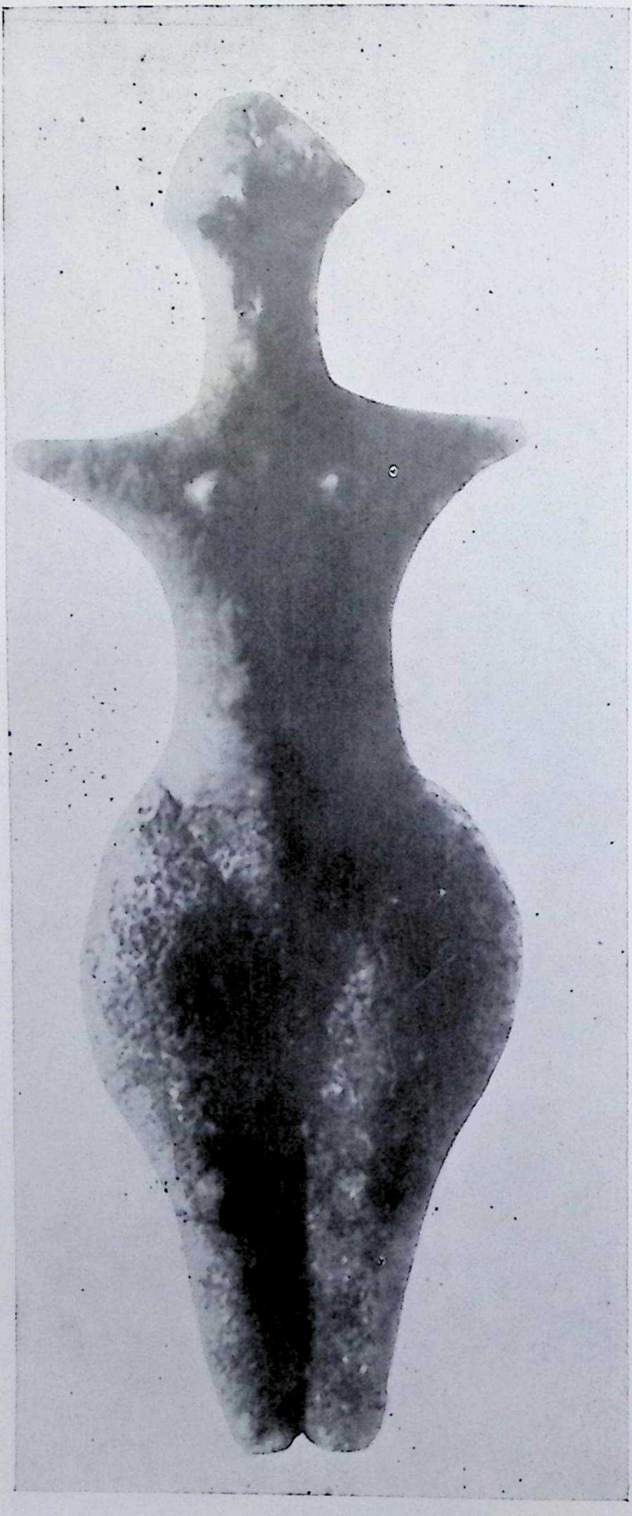

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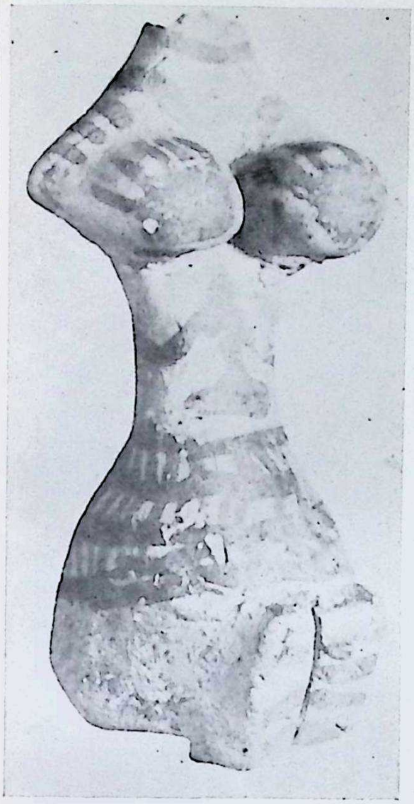

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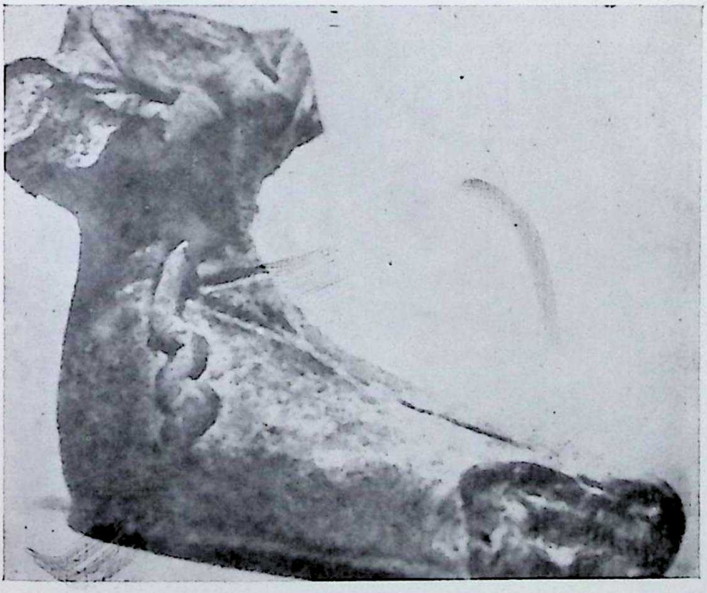

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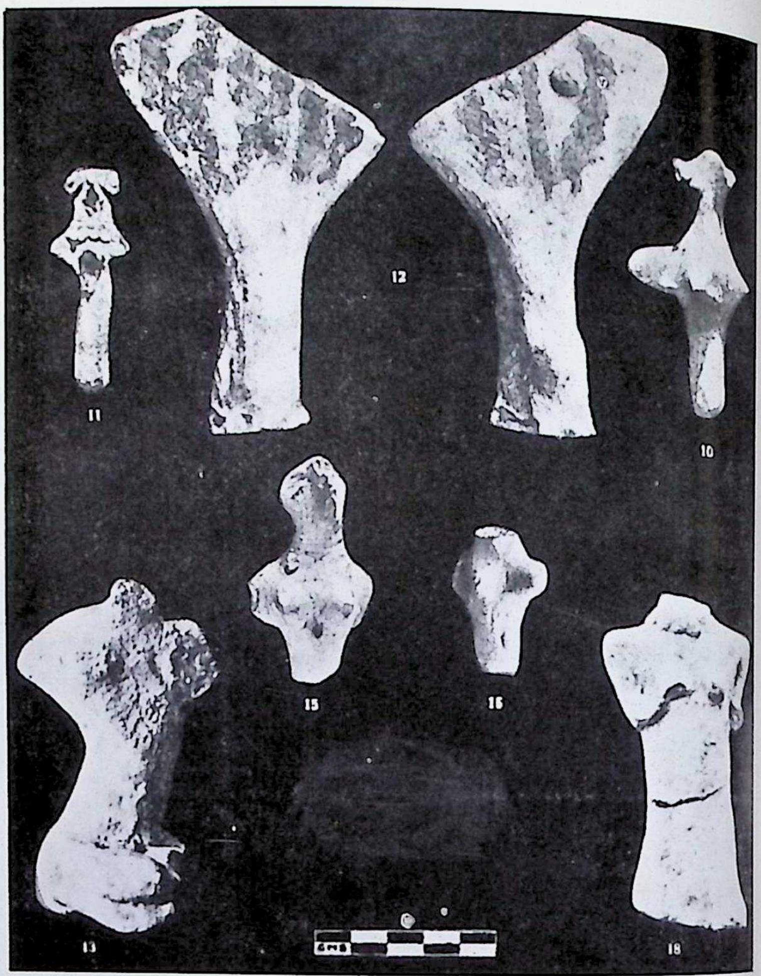

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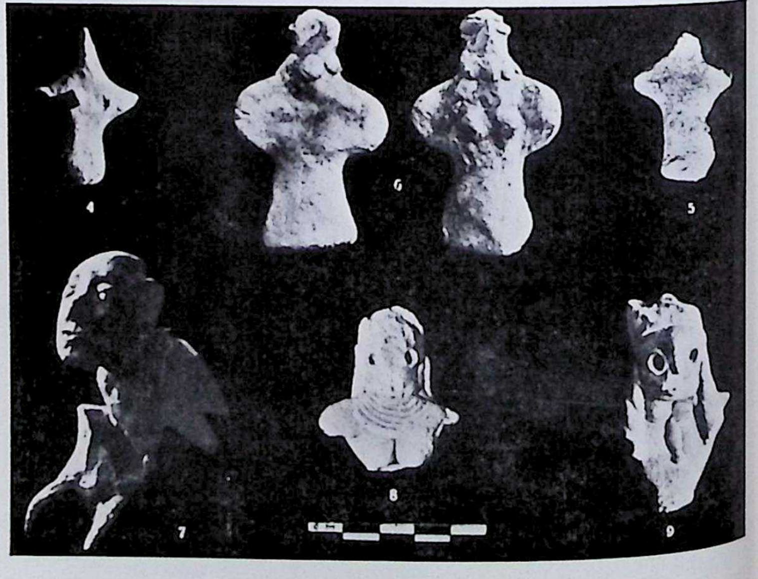

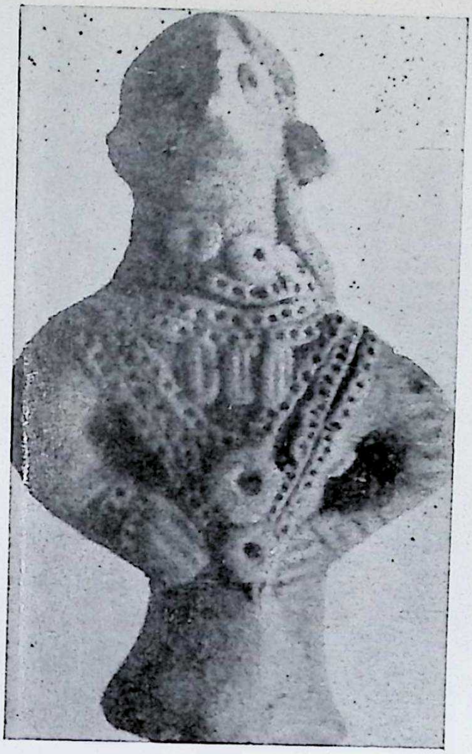

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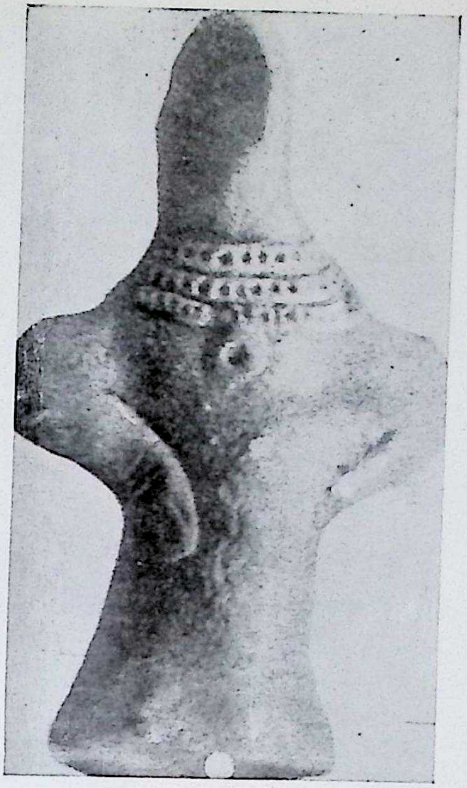

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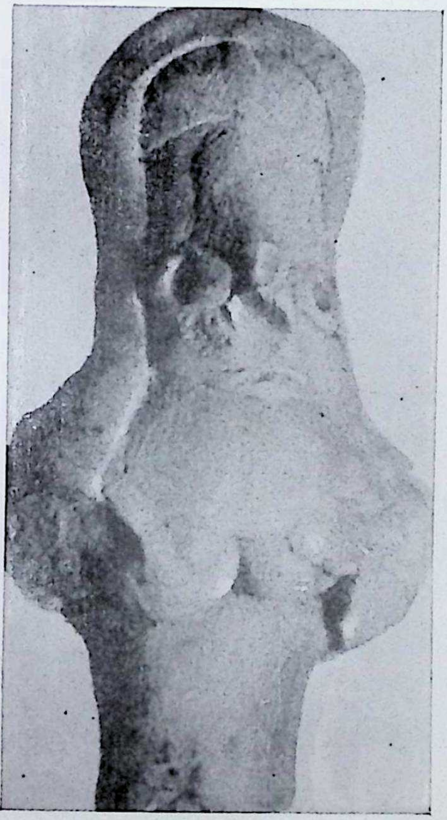

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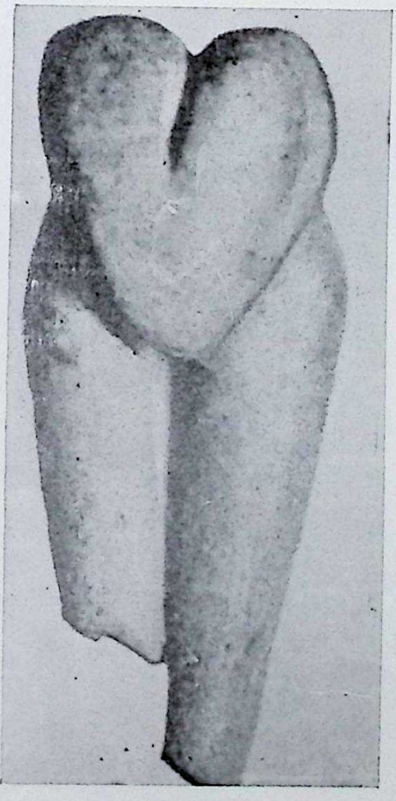

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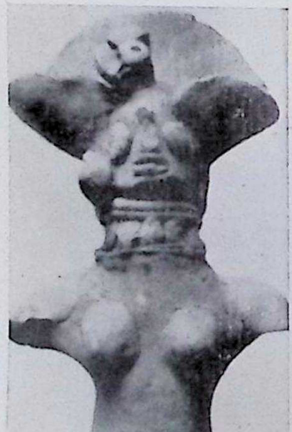

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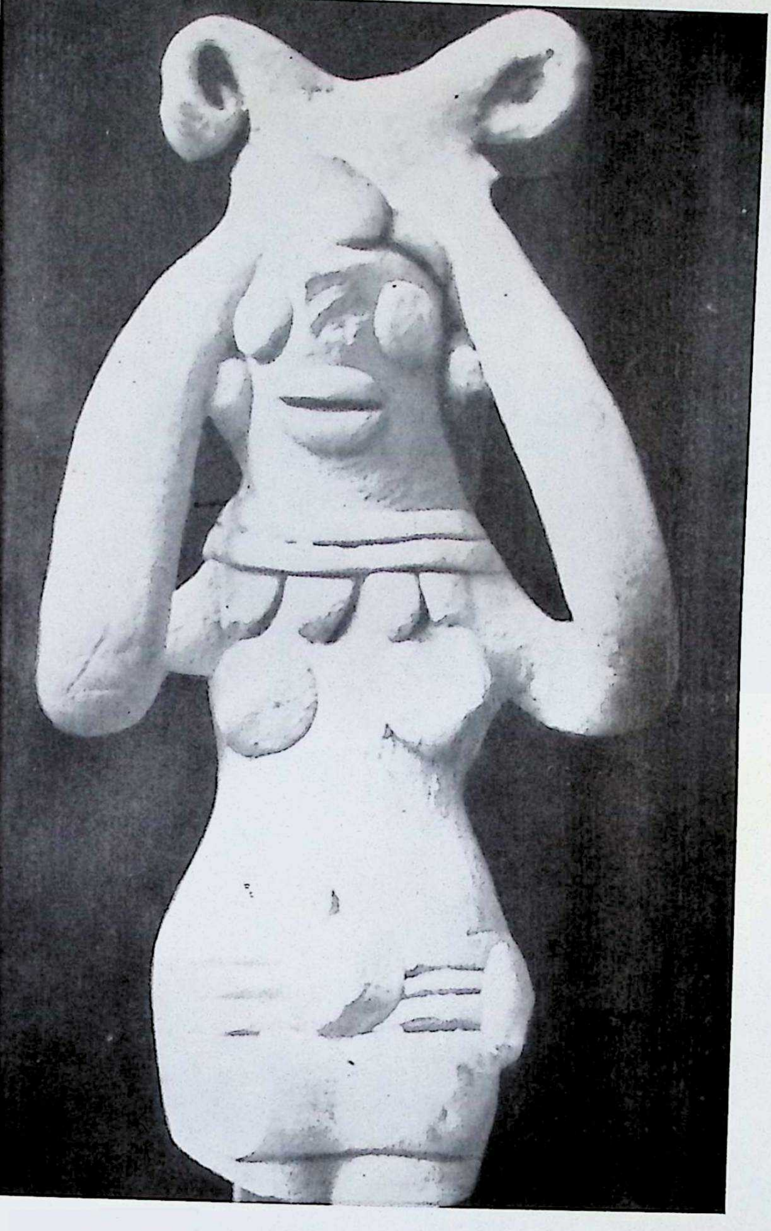

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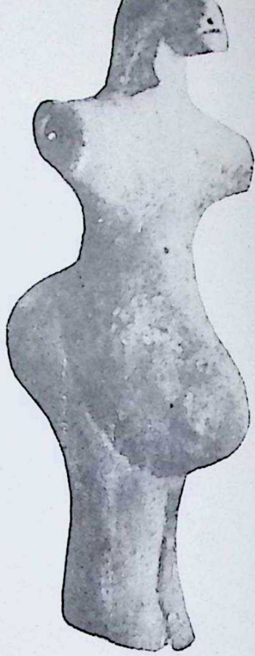

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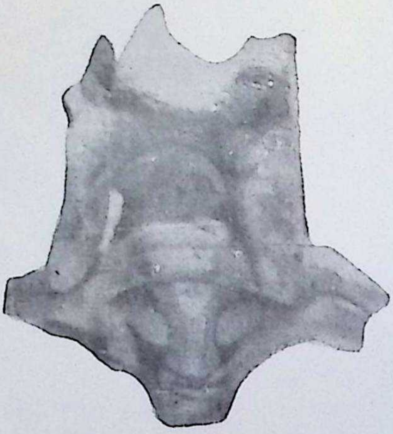

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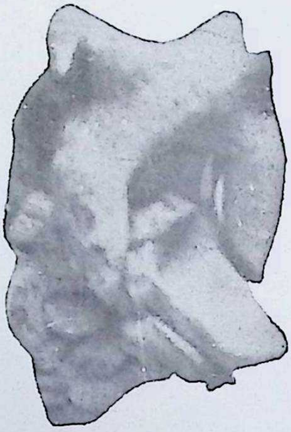

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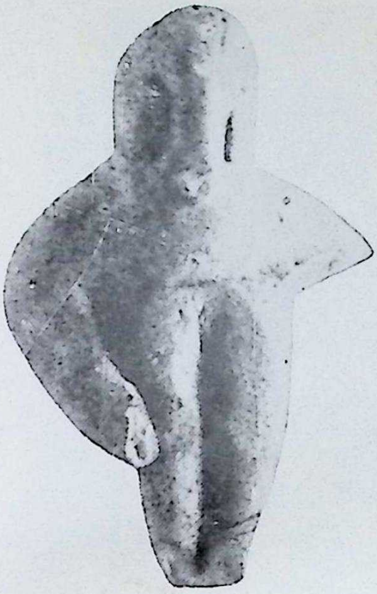

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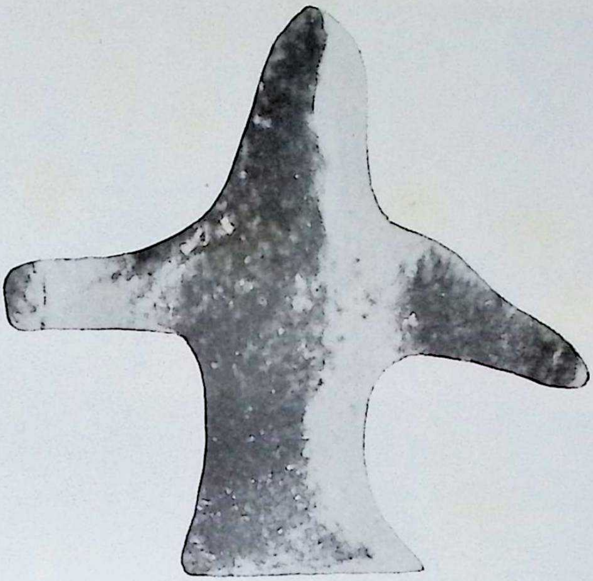

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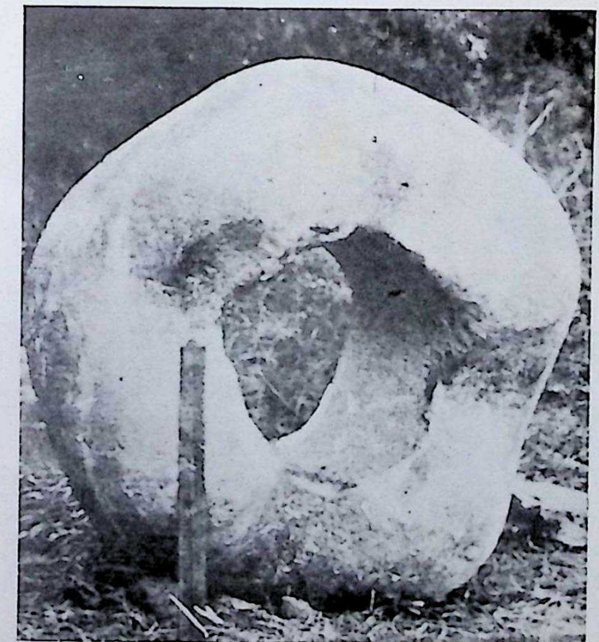

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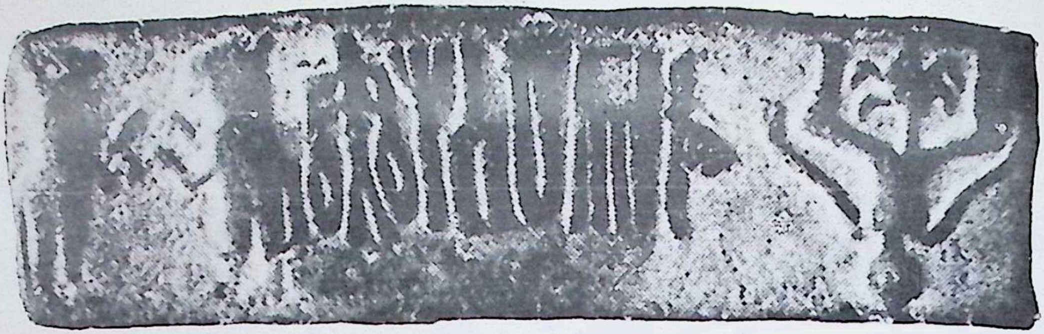

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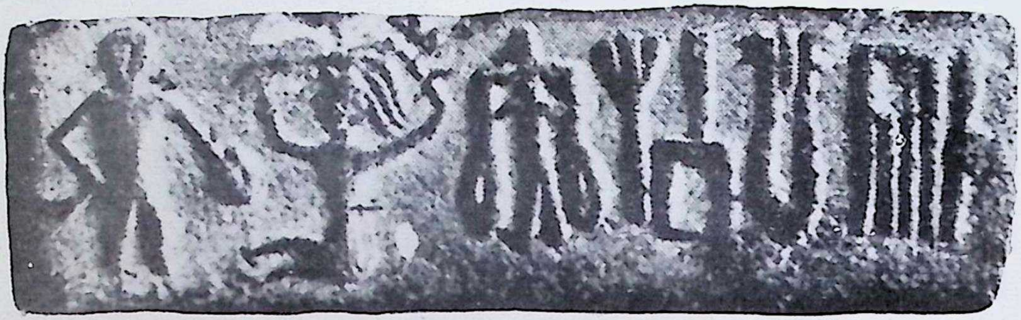

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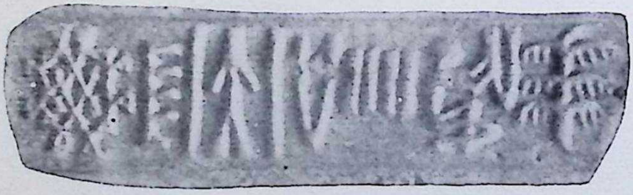

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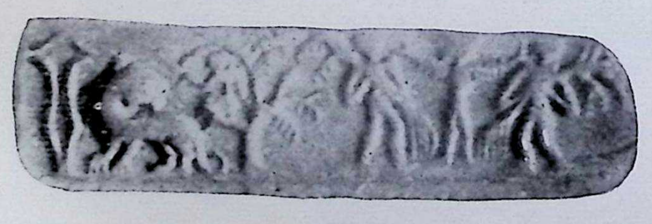

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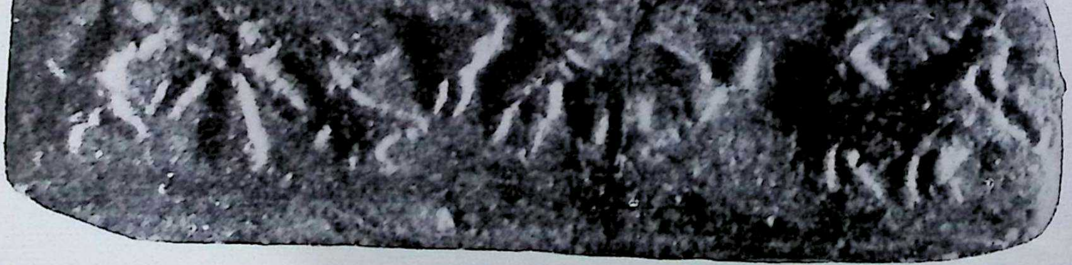

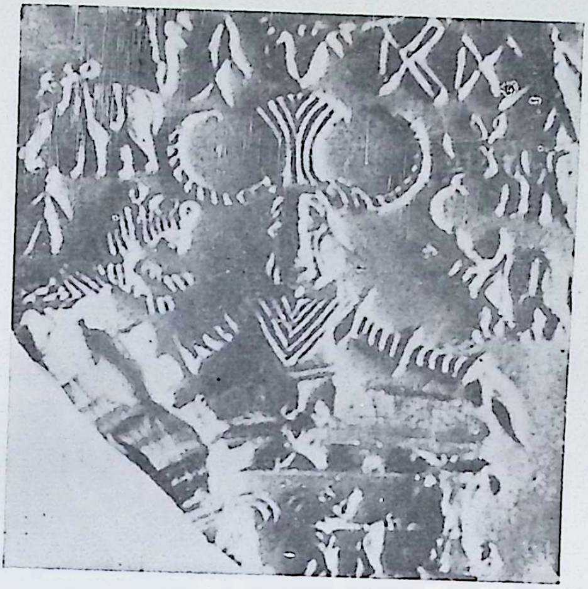

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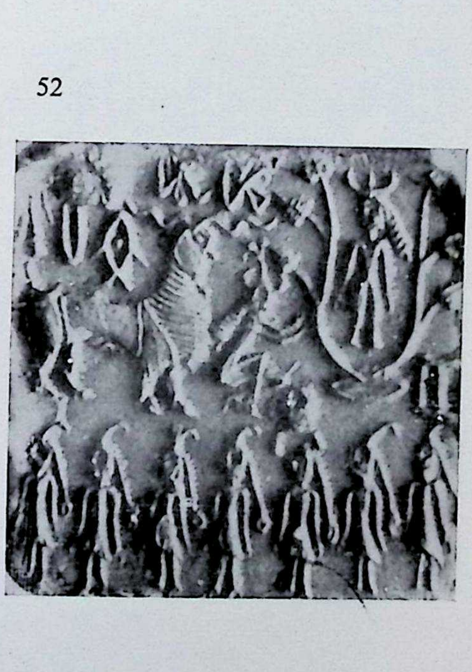

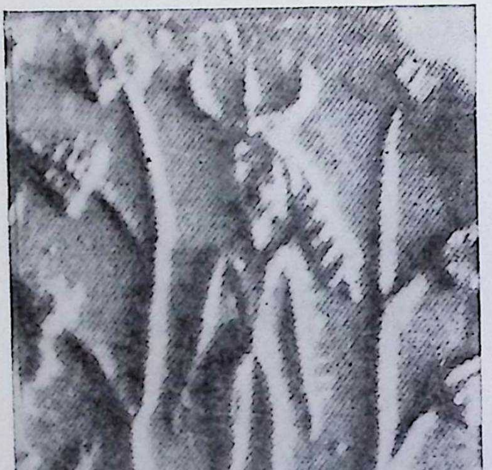

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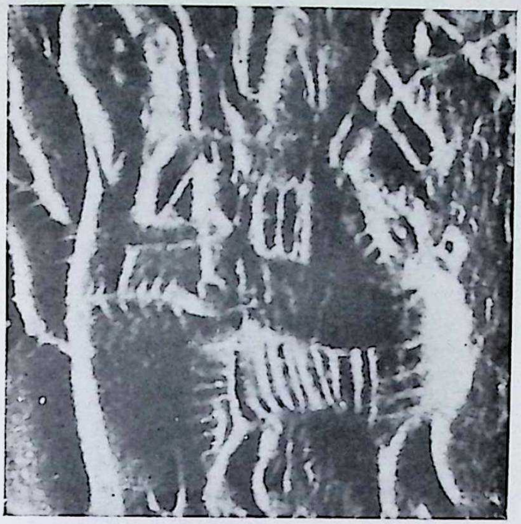

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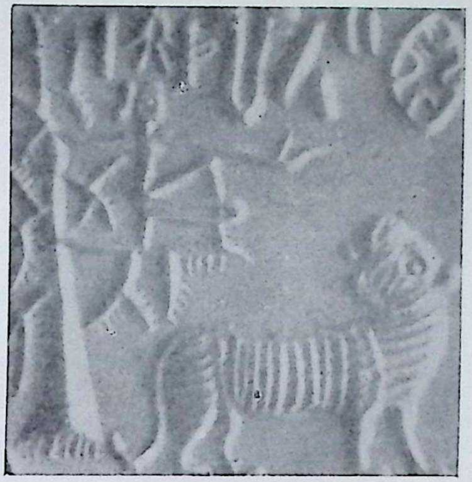

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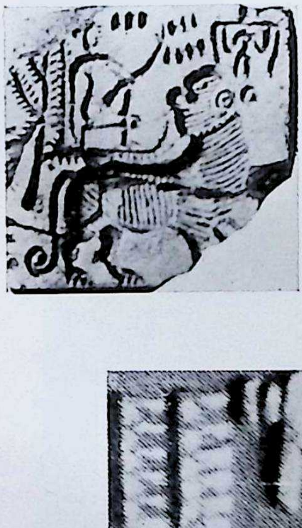

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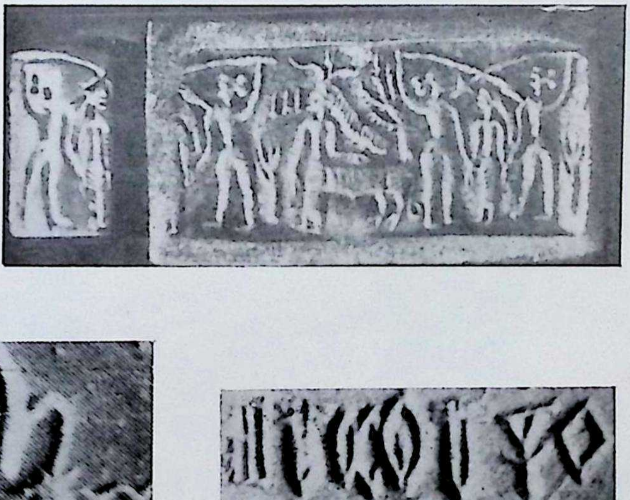

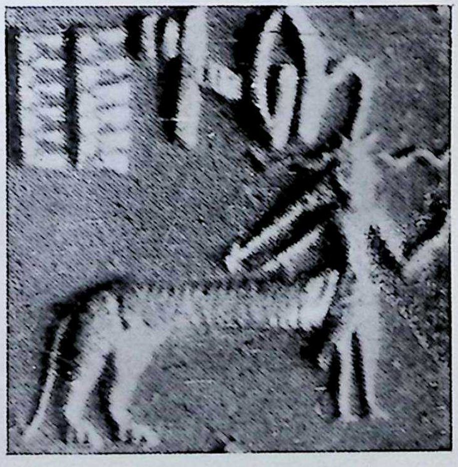

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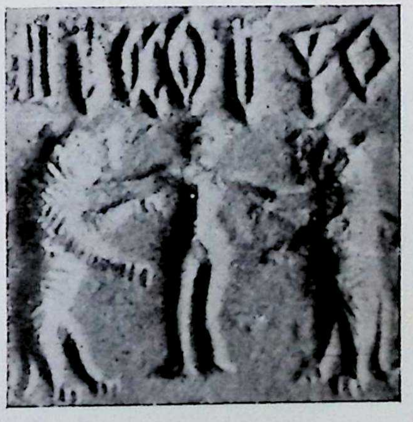

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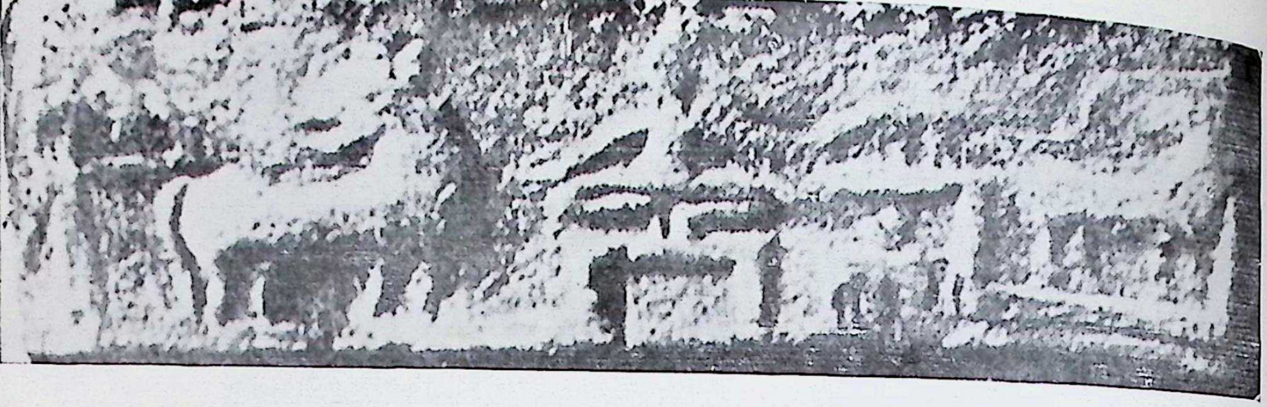

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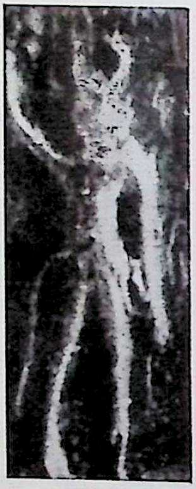

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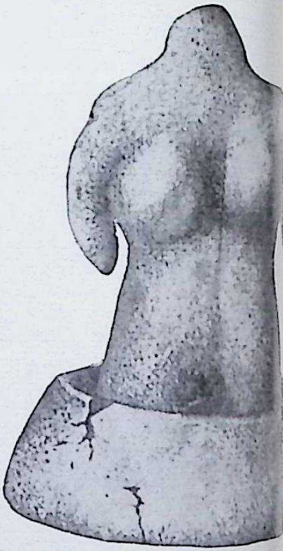

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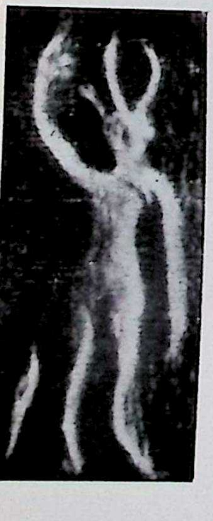

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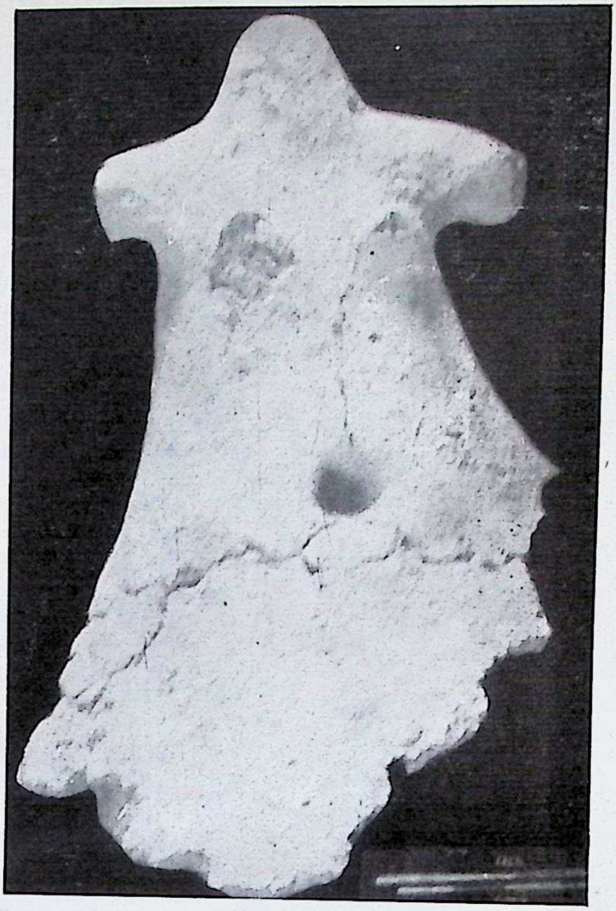

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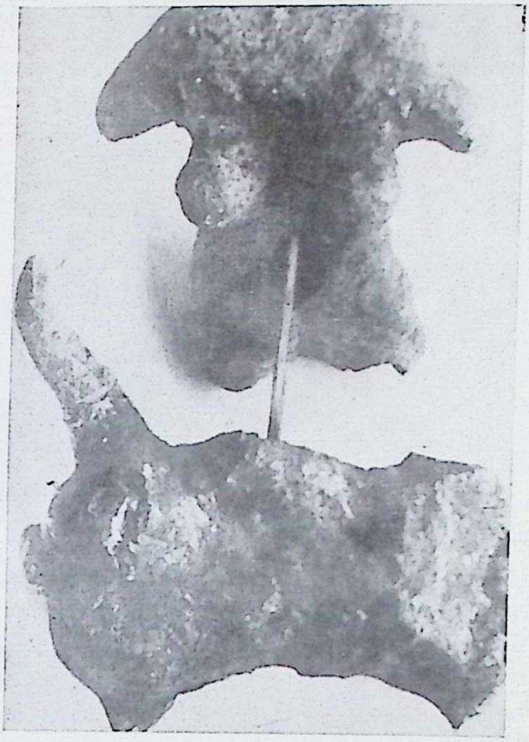

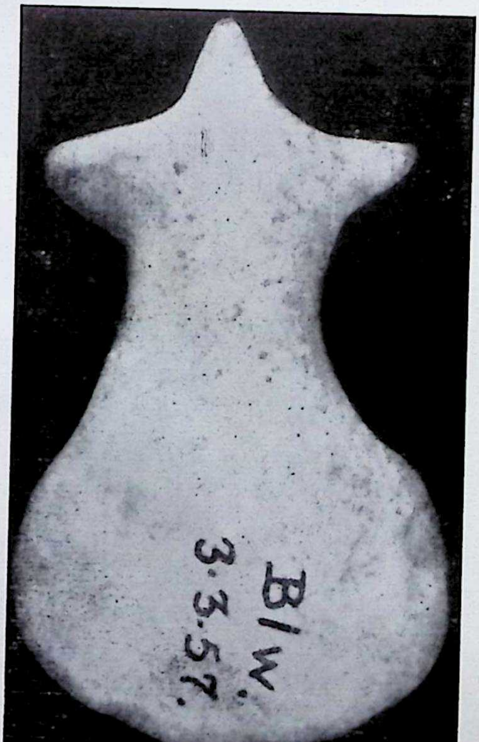

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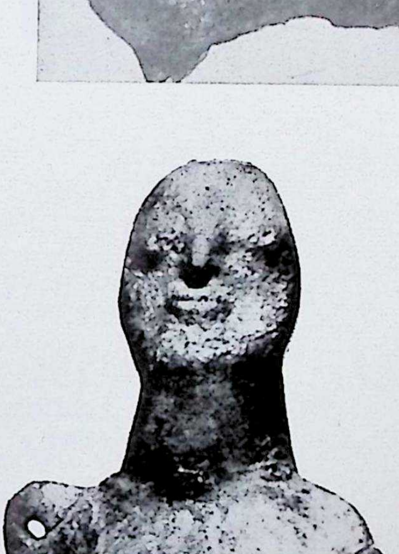

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INTRODUCTION

TO identify a divinity as male or female is almost universal to all religions and mythologies. Indeed, it has been on the model of the manifest sex-phenomenon of life on this earth. But as regards the expression through language and grammatical genders the differentiation of this nature is comparatively a late achievement of human culture. In the beginning, it must have come to be understood on a thought level; at first, it appears, was recognised the distinction between animate and inanimate existences, and then discovered the relevance of a sex differentiation on the basis of the reproductive phenomenon that takes place from a particular section, that is "females" alone—hence their unique importance in contradistinction to the rest of nature's creation, deprived of this miraculous gift.

In other words, at the back of any such understanding in the primitive mind as to make distinction of sexes, the rudimentary idea seemingly was the definition as regards 'the capacity of creating new life': the most intimate exemplar of which being human "mothers". Thus, the basic bio-psychological concern of human existence appears to have served as the elementary and perhaps the earliest link of belief in primitive theology. By understanding it the primitive mind should have easily recognised awfully the miraculous potency of child-producing females, or the "motherhood". It was, indeed, this identification of the femininity in its exceptional capacity which consequently led to the evolution of the concept of the Mother-goddess.

Thus, among all religious beliefs, the first notion to appear was presumably the myth of motherhood. Both on human as well as cosmic levels, the primitive man instinctively came to perceive in the motherhood a power to be venerated and feared in its own right. A step further, he arrived at the abstraction of the mother-principle and its further personalisation into several goddess-mother types.

Round the concept of motherhood a wider symbology of sex and fertility evolved as recognising her identity in the creative manifestations of several natural phenomena, powers and their functions. For example, the earth, the water, the vegetation, etc. Still on a different level preliminary notions of the femininity in terms of diverse nature of mother's behaviour were further analysed, through a psychological evolution, such as the Producing Mother, Nourishing Mother, Benevolent Mother, Punishing Mother, Terrific Mother, Killing Mother, Ruling Mother, Great Mother, etc.

Such psychical or functional determinations proved to suggest differentiating archetypes of the Mother-goddess, and came to be expressed when imputated to the evolved deity-images through a series of symbols of ideas, attributes and myths.

As pointed out by Robert Briffault, "Although personified abstractions are foreign to primitive thought, the primal Mother partakes from her very nature of an abstract character as the prototype of motherhood in general."[1]

This presumably also became the reason for the early dominance of the mother or the mother forming family-centre—in the matriarchate—and resulted in the social and then economic supremacy of the female in primitive social evolution.

Besides, as it is observed by Eric Neumann in his psychoanalytical study of the Great Mother, "The dominance of the archetype of the Great Mother constellates the human psyche of the primordial situation in which consciousness develops only slowly and only gradually emancipates itself from the dominion of unconsciousness directing process."[2] Further he says that "it remains irrelevant whether the female or male group or—as we believe—both were the psychic vehicles of the archetype. The archetype of the Great Mother-goddess can take form in a patriarchal society, as conversely that of the Father God can take form in a matriarchal society."[3]

In the earliest archaeological survivals of Palaeolithic times, a prominent and widely gained belief appears to be associated with the mysterious potency of the motherhood. A remarkable class of statuettes in stone, bone or mammoth's ivory, discovered over a great stretch of territory from Spain to Siberia are commonly believed to evince some early traits of the Mother-goddess cultus. Such anthropomorphic female shapes from Aurignacian-Perigordian deposits all over Europe have come to be known amongst scholars by the generic name of "Venus", but only in gentle irony, after the 'Venus de Milo'.

Of the Stone Age mobiliary statuettes, the bulk is known to represent females, which, despite crude and imperfect figurative elements in their fashioning, appear to suggest a defined physical type by their prominently shown sex-portions. It is believed that the representational emphasis on the maternal motifs, namely the pelvis, hips and breasts, grossly characterises an intended image-type, presumably of the Great Stone Age Mother, whose widely distributed Palaeolithic cultus thus appears documented by these curious plastics.

In size, the statuettes are never more than a foot, and usually smaller. From the Aurignacian-Perigordian deposits in the Franco-Cantabrian area, about sixty statuettes and their fragments are known to have come; of them a dozen or so only are preserved more or less intact. But all appear to be related with each other in their morphological details; feet are hardly shown; the legs are invariably fused together; in the cases where arms are existing they bent inwards to rest on the breasts; the head is extra-ordinarily small and often forms a featureless knob or conical appendage.[4] A conspicuous opulence of the bodily parts relating to femininity, is their common aspect exaggerated to the extent that, in words of Paolo Graziosi, it 'unequivocally reveals that the end sought by the artist was an expression of fertile femininity—maternity in its fullest, most absolute sense'.[5]

The identification of these Stone Age plastics as representing figures or icons of the Mother-goddess is widely accepted. But the problem of their true character has always remained involved and puzzling.

Considering distinct morphological shapes and their centres of origin, the earliest series of these Palaeolithic "Venuses" can be studied under the following groups.

(1) From the Brassempouy Cave in Landes. These ivory statuettes, mostly mutilated, appear to represent a comparatively realistic class of figures; the surviving female torsos and bodies exhibit the delicate modelling characterised by a striking exuberance for giving emphasis on certain portions, namely the breasts and hips.[6]

(2) From Lespugue in Haute-Garonne (France). A statuette in mammoth ivory, though damaged in its left part (*Ill. 1*). It is indeed a masterly figure, with its dynamic composition in several superimposed spheroidal masses, 'clearly showing a tendency towards stereometric abstraction'.[7] In outline the piece represents a lozenge; the upper portion defined by a characteristic little head with featureless

face and a flat bust presents a remarkable contrast to the voluminous structure of the lower body, which shows the large breasts hanging over the stomach that protrudes to cover the pubic region, the sideways bulging hips and the adipose thighs, tapered below for the legs.

(3) From the Grimaldi Caves in Balzi Rossi. These steatite or soapstone statuettes (*Ill. 2*), about half a dozen almost completely preserved, show a type of which the following features made prominent and grossly shaped in contrast to the other featureless and understated details appear symbolical:

(a) Marked opulence in the lower parts of the body, represented by adipose masses for genital portion, thighs and hips.
(b) Crudely modelled head and remarkably rotund breasts.
(c) In some characteristic instances the buttocks are over-developed in the so-called 'steatopygic' aspect.[8] (Another important example is the "Savignano Venus", *Ill. 3*.)
(d) The barely sketched arms are stuck to the body; the slender legs tapering into a tip with the feet missing.

(4) Ivory statuettes of a distinct type, from Dolni Vestonice (*Ill. 4*)[9] (Czechoslovakia), Kostienki (*Ill. 5*)[10] (Russia). (Also one ivory 'Venus' from Malta[11] (near Lake Baikal, Siberia) represents somewhat analogous production.) Its main traits are:

(a) These figures apparently suggest a connecting type between the Grimaldi and the Willendorf type.[12]
(b) Doubtless this statuette group shows all emphatic features of the Palaeolithic mother, as seen in above instances.[13]
(c) The type appears to be qualified by the broad shoulders with barely suggested thin arms, the large pendulous breasts resting on the well-modelled stomach which shadows over the pelvis, the thick thighs and the tapering legs, that are divided by a longitudinal cleft running down from the point of pubic triangle.

(5) Calcareous stone statuette (ht 13 cms) from Willendorf (in Lower Austria). It is a completely preserved piece (*Ill. 6*) exhibiting outstanding artistic potentiality. The emphatic iconography of the Palaeolithic "Mother-goddess" is seen in it with all its distinctive features and eloquent symbols. Indeed, it represents the perfected type of the luxuriant motherhood, as invoked by the Palaeolithic man, with the following details:

(a) Squattish nude body of a woman with enormously developed proportions.
(b) Having a large round head covered by a mop of hair; the face being featureless and almost hidden under the complex coiffure.
(c) The arms are extremely slender and the hands are folded above the breasts. (Probably wore bracelets.)
(d) The parts that concern with the reproductive function are expressed by

exaggerated adipose masses—viz. large pendulous breasts; a prominent belly; full hips protruding at the sides but not steatopygous: at the back the gluteus region is rather flat;[14] the genital region is shown distinctly though partly covered by the protuberant belly and the thick obese thighs.

(e) The legs are divided below the knees, that are admirably rendered and end in stumps with the feet omitted.

(f) At the time of its discovery traces of redochre paint were seen preserved in its porous stone. This suggests its worship by the Palaeolithic man with certain ritualistic ceremonies.

(g) Akin in type to the Willendorf female are the statuettes found at Gagarino[15] in Russia (*Ill.* 7)—representing almost the same concept of the Palaeolithic femininity. This fact evinces beyond doubt the diffusion of the Stone Age "Great Mother" cultus and its widely understood symbolism. Thus from the South Russian steppe to Central and Western Europe, her representational type is found almost the same and, to some extent, may be termed conventionalised in the 'grotesque' emphasis on the fertility of the feminine.

A few points as regards the involved problem of the identification of the "Venuses" as representing the presumable icons of a Palaeolithic Mother-goddess must be noted below. Their identity as such is often considered quite suggestive by itself in the morphological details of the statuettes; but even such a widely understood notion can always remain hazardous and be doubted in want of some supportive evidence to be provided from a source other than the objects themselves. In fact, we do not have any such contemporary evidence that can go to reveal their identity as "goddesses", or "Mother-goddesses", or representations of a single "great goddess". The above criticism no doubt stands there. Keeping it in mind, we can analyse from a different angle any of the arguments that is given to suggest identity or significance of these earliest known plastics. The following enquiries into their character appear of value:

(1) Were these female figures with a distorted exaggeration on their sexual parts intended to represent caricature of the feminine form?

Such a case seems warranted when one compares them with the realistic Palaeolithic sculptures and engravings representing animals.

(2) Whether these artistic creations by Palaeolithic men were made to serve an end in themselves? If so, then there would have been no practical concern involved in their manufacture.

(3) Did the form seen in these female figures represent anatomical peculiarities of some ethnic type or types?

(4) Or, was this form with curious excessiveness or opulence on certain portions of the body a psychic projection of the "aesthetic" ideal of femininity as understood by Palaeolithic men?

In other words, does it represent the "sexual taste" of the Palaeolithic man?

(But this does not appear to be the case for these pyknic and unshapely figures suggest just the opposite stress.)

(5) Or, whether these female figurines were intended to be symbols of maternity—involving all rudimentary and instinctive magical beliefs that concern birth—with the secondary or outward erogenous parts of the female body (namely, the breasts, abdomen and thighs) disproportionately exaggerated?[16]

There can be a few more suggestions (or conjectural queries) as to the identity of these Palaeolithic figures. But contemporary appreciation of these female statuettes by their authors can hardly be known today for certain or in full. However, in his psychoanalytical study of the primordial image of the Great Mother, Eric Neumann has put forth significant observations on these unshapely relics of Palaeolithic man's creation. We wish to quote here the following remarks made by him:

"With their emphasis on the impersonal and transpersonal, these figures of the Great Mother Goddess are primordial types of the feminine elementary character. In all of them the symbolism of the rounded vessel predominates. The belly and breasts, the latter often gigantic, are like the central region of this feminine vessel, the "sole reality". In these figures the fertility of the Feminine has found an expression both prehuman and superhuman. The head is sightless, inclined toward the middle of the body; the arms only suggested, and they too stress the middle of the body. The gigantic thighs and loins taper off into thin legs; the feet have broken off, but there is no doubt that they were frail and by no means conceived as supports of the giant body-vessel. In the magnificent Lespugue figure, whose breasts, belly, thighs and triangular genital zone form a single cluster, this symbolic fullness of the elementary character is still more evident than in the naturalistic and therefore less symbolic Venus of Willendorf."

"The unshapely figures of the Great Mother are representations of the pregnant goddess of fertility, who was looked upon throughout the world as the goddess of pregnancy and child-bearing, and who, as a cult object not only of women but also of men, represents the archetypal symbol of fertility and of the sheltering, protecting, and nourishing elementary character."[17]

However, it is apparent that most of the Palaeolithic mobiliary statuettes described above portray a female particularly in the state of advanced pregnancy. Unequivocally they were intended to represent the motherhood, emphatically stated in the anatomy of the figures through exaggerated opulence of concerned zones of fertility. What more they were understood to signify or symbolise by their Palaeolithic authors can only be surmised from the contexts in which this archetypal "mother" type[18] appears to be adopted or adapted in subsequent ages. Their religious or deified status in the Stone Age context is merely a susceptible point.

An important series of Stone Age bas-reliefs was discovered in a rock-shelter at Laussel in the Dordogne. Five sculpted blocks from the Upper Aurignacian deposit depict human figures. From this evidence the Palaeolithic nude woman does not appear to be an isolated and obscure identity. One sculpture shows a male figure, of singularly graceful and realistic form, as contrasted to the obese female type seen on other bas-reliefs.[19] This fact tends to suggest that the unshapely body-type of the female figures was intended to convey some distinct archetypal form signifying more than a direct portrayal of the pregnant woman or mother.

The largest sculpture (*Ill. 10*) shows complete figure of a nude massive woman[20] almost akin in form to the Willendorf Venus. Her head is vaguely outlined and has thick hair falling to the shoulders. The egg-shaped face is featureless and presents a significant contrast to the enormous torso. The rest of body symbolises exuberance and adiposity possessing large pendulous breasts, a rounded abdomen, a prominent vulvar region, enormous hips and fleshy thighs. But the outstanding feature of the figure is the crescent-shaped object held in her right hand. Remarkable significance of this attribute, i.e. a bison's horn, seems to be emphasised by the representation itself for the woman's head was shown in profile being turned towards the horn. Like the Willendorf statuette, the present sculpture also shows traces of red-ochre paint. The paint smeared on the figures possibly reveals the institution of offering red pigment being followed in Palaeolithic times as part of some invoking ritual or magico-religious practice. As pointed out by Prof. E.O. James, red pigment employed widely in Palaeolithic ritual was the surrogate of blood, the life-giving agent *par excellence.*[21]

A fragmentary block shows a similar figure of the nude mother, represented in almost the same posture. Her right arm is extended horizontally as holding in the hand a horn or a sickle-shaped object (*Ill. 9*). Though the details of this sculpture are much abraded, her direct similarity with the Brassempouy and Willendorf statuettes can be very well noticed as regards the depiction of hair, voluminous breasts and prominent belly, ending below in a triangular projection.[22]

The third piece of sculpture also represented the same female, but only a part of the figure has survived, showing her pendulous breasts and rounded stomach (*Ill. 10A*).

The fourth bas-relief shows a very curious depiction that is believed to represent either a scene of copulation or child-birth (*Ill. 8*). But the latter seems to be a correct (or better) interpretation of this sketchy and deteriorated engraving. Here we see the figure of the same nude mother, with all the characteristic details of her set physiognomy being indicated. Her arms seem to be suspended close to the body. Below her thighs, which probably extend apart having the legs curved outwards, the outline of another human being appears with its head downcast. Apparently a scene of accouchement was depicted on this summarily executed engraving. The familiar nude woman, occurring here as engaged in the act of parturition or child-bearing, thus was the centre of a Palaeolithic cultus of which primary concerns were the mysterious process of fecundity and life's propagation.

Significance of a widely practised propitiatory magic of reproduction, in fact a fertility cultus, centring in and round this obese nude woman becomes quite perspicuous in the works of the Magdalenian period, the last phase of Upper Palaeolithic. A curious depiction engraved on a bone piece from the Isturitz cave shows the fat woman being followed by another human figure, presumably a man,[23] whose body below the shoulders is missing (*Ill. 11*). Hairiness of their nude body is quite realistically represented. Both wear ornaments; the woman has a necklace and anklets, the man a collar-ornament and bangles. An erotic motif is doubtless present in the scene. The barbed arrow pierced in the right thigh of the woman possibly implied some magical or amorous intention.

An identical fat woman also occurs on some stone plaquettes from the Cave of La Marche (Vienne, France).[24] Her figure is represented in profile, marked by the large pendulous breasts shaped like leather-bottles and the enormous belly; the arms and legs are very slender; in one case she is seated.

An engraved composition on one bone fragment from Laugerie Basse (in Dordogne) represents a similar pregnant woman,[25] lying on her back under the hind legs of a reindeer. The real significance of the scene remains obscure, but some definite fertility purpose seems to be expressed, connected supposedly with the Palaeolithic man's urge of stimulating, side by side human prolificity, the fecundity of animal species upon which he depended for his subsistence.

An intimate study by A. Leroi-Gourhan of the topographical position of the female, male and animal figures in the Cave Art has disclosed one important fact. He observes that the "female representations are often situated in the central area of the compositions, alone or accompanied by large herbivores . . ." Regarding human male representations, he remarks that "Their topographical position is in nearly all caves at the back of the caves or on the periphery of a central composition—that is, inversely to the location of the female figures."[26] This significant placement of the females with the subjects of the central sections in the caves possibly indicated in Palaeolithic ritual the controlling fertility symbolism of a prescribed purpose. In Cave Art the human female representations are very limited as compared to the great number of male representations. But as contrasted to the unassuming male representations, the women in fact possess an eloquent physiognomical type that overtly expressed maternal fecundity through the outward signs and attributes of a pregnant woman. Thus, reasonably enough, propitiatory rites to promote reproduction of the animals, upon whom the food supply of Palaeolithic men depended, seem to have centred round the nude mother who occupied, as noted above, the main section of the cave-sanctuaries where such magico-religious or esoteric rites were presumably performed by Palaeolithic people.

Probably as essential parts of the fertility pursuits of Palaeolithic men, the scenes representing the so-called "fertility ritual dance" appear on the walls of some Magdalenian caves. The grouped human or semi-human figures of the masked dancers, seen in the caves at Les Combarelles,[27] Marsoulas,[28] and of Los Casares[29] (near Guadalajara), can be well interpreted[30] as delineating a Palaeolithic dance ritual that aimed at promoting fecundity of the animal species, which, represented all around in the caves, formed primary source of Palaeolithic man's food-supply. The masked human figures clothed in animal skins are found represented—often singly—in a number of other caves in France and Spain, such as of Les Trois Freres,[31] Altamira,[32] Le Gabillou,[33] Hornos de la Peña,[34] Le Portel[35] and La Peña de Candamo.[36] The masked figures with similar feature also appear on a few engraved plaquettes and horn objects from the Magdalenian deposits. An engraving on a stag antler found in the Abri Mege at Teyjat[37] shows three dancing men camouflaged with chamois' skins. Other bone and stone pieces carved with the representation of a masked figure provide further evidence of interest, such as from Gourdan,[38] Mas d'Azil,[39] La Madeleine,[40] Laugerie Basse,[41] Isturitz,[42] Lourdes[43] and Bedeilhac.[44]

The above mentioned figures of the nude woman with prominent vulvar region, however, tend to indicate the emerging symbolism of the female organ. In this light the numerous vulviform representations seen in the works of Stone Age men become conspicuous. They possibly were held emblematic to the reproductive motif centred in the feminine. The famous "Three Venuses" frieze of the Magdalenian period at Anglessur-l'Anglin[45] may possibly suggest this transition from the full woman representation to a vulviform, such as depicted in the cave art and on mobiliary pieces.[46]

As has been observed by Grahame Clark,[47] "If one leaves aside Siberia in this context, the distribution of the Venus figurines agrees fairly closely with that of the Gravettian culture. Even if they do not extend quite so far west—no figures have yet been found in Iberia—they still occur over a distance as the crow flies of some 2,000 miles: over this great distance from the banks of the Don to the foot-hills of the western Pyrenees they display a general resemblance so close as to suggest the movements of an actual people; and this impression is heightened by agreement in flint work, in decorative art and, so far as east and central Europe are concerned, in the representations of mammoths."

As far as the evidence goes, it was possibly the Gravettian man in parts of Europe and South-West Asia, of the Advanced Palaeolithic phase, who reached a mental horizon, also with a sufficient skill of handicraft, of a kind that made him primitively understand the maternal aspects of birth and life's propagation, and introduce the so-called "Venus" female figures as rudimentary symbols of his that understanding. The recent researches in the field have now indicated that their main diffusion centre it would seem was in the Southern Russian steppe and Western Asia. Particularly in the latter region, sufficiently shown to be the main cradleland of the Gravettian people, the beliefs centring round the female figures, besides other culture-traits of this phase, are now thought to have communicated into Neolithic heritage, presumably without passing through the successive Solutrean and Magdalenian phases of the Upper Palaeolithic evolution. As remarked by Prof. E.O. James, "Moreover, it was in this region that it became most highly developed and firmly established in the religion of the Ancient Near East, with the rise of agriculture in the Neolithic civilisation (sic) in and after the fifth millennium B.C."[48]

However, the discovery of a bone figurine (*Ill. 12*) from Daiya on the Lohanda, of Gravel III context (with radiocarbon date of 20000 B.P.) in the Belan Valley, Mirzapur district, tends to afford for the first time now a unique evidence for the Palaeolithic Mother-goddess cult in India.[49] Although some doubts were maintained in the beginning as regards the anthropomorphic shape or female identity of the figure, Prof. Sankalia has been led from his actual inspection of the specimen in possession of the Allahabad University, to the conclusion that "it bears a remarkable affinity in general with the female figures regarded as Fertility or Mother-goddess from western Asia, and eastern and western Europe." According to his description, it is about 8 cm high, between 1.5 cm and 2.5 cm broad, and about one cm in thickness. The face is featureless, a triangular formation, the trunk stick-like with a pointed, triangular portion for the legs and probably the extremity broken. The pendant breasts, and the broad loins definitely indicate that this is a female figurine."[50]

With their beginnings in Palaeolithic times the rudimentary beliefs about woman's birthgiving attributes and fertility appear to reach a better understanding by the emergence of man from hunting-gathering to food-production. Jaricho in the

Jordan valley, emerging from an earlier stage into the stage of culture what has been termed as the Natufian, and then successively into a full-fledged Neolithic community, has yielded from its second pre-pottery Neolithic settlement small female statuettes in clay, along with those of animals. They are assignable to the early seventh millennium B.C. on the basis of radiocarbon dating. Similarly, the Neolithic villagers of Jarmo, some 600 miles away in Iraqi Kurdistan, appear to have for their household divinity the "Mother-goddess" statuettes, fashioned in unbaked clay. Majority of them are, however, schematic figures; some showing her in seated posture. The strangely stylised seated figures, making first appearance at Jarmo, sometimes described as 'foot-shaped', are also known at Tepe Sarab (*Ill. 16*) near Kermanshah dated by the C-14 method to round about the beginning of the 6th millennium B.C.[51]

But the most important light on the Neolithic cultus of a Mother-goddess is shed by the evidence from Anatolian sites, namely Catal Hüyük (*Ills. 14-15*) and Hacilar (*Ill. 13*), and outside Anatolia from certain stations of the Halaf culture in Iraq.

The recently discovered site of Catal Hüyük, still under excavation, is easily the largest Neolithic town-settlement known up-to-date.[52] About forty sanctuaries unearthed here have provided a unique picture of Neolithic religion in Anatolia. They cover a period of several centuries, ranging between c. 6500 and 5700 B.C. As remarked by the excavator, "a continuity in religion can be demonstrated from Catal Hüyük to Hacilar and so on till the great 'Mother-Goddess' of archaic and classical times, the shadowy figures known as Cybele, Artemis and Aphrodite."[53] The Catal Hüyük shrines are embellished with wall paintings and reliefs providing rich evidence for the Neolithic religion, particularly featured by the figures of vultures, rams, leopards, bulls, bull-heads, goddesses, and diverse geometric representations. It is very significant that the sculptural reliefs of the goddess form the main centre of attraction in the shrines and are the only human depictions available of plaster work. As observed by Mellaart, "In plaster reliefs goddesses appear solely in anthropomorphic form and the place of the male is taken by bulls and rams, a more impressive exponent of male fertility."[54]

The relief figures of goddesses are known to make their first appearance in Level VII and continue onwards. The typical goddess figure met with at Catal Hüyük is of a very stylised shape, having a rectangular design for the trunk topped by an oval for the head; the arms and the legs being rendered by horizontally extended stumps, but often turned upwards from the elbows and the knees respectively. Besides this principal type there are also certain other interesting statues of the goddess, showing her enthroned or standing. The following are the comments by J. Mellaart, the excavator, on the evidence for the goddess cult and her shrines: "The statues allow us to recognise the main deities worshipped by neolithic people at Catal Hüyük. The principal deity was a goddess who is shown in her three aspects, as a young woman, a mother giving birth or as an old woman, in one case accompanied by a bird of prey, probably vulture. Simplest and more terrifying aspects show her semi-iconic as a stalactite or concretion with a human head which probably emphasises her chthonic aspects related to caves and underworld. One figure shows the twin goddess and a group of three figures shows a girl, a woman and a boy god standing behind or riding leopards, the sacred animal of the goddess. A male deity also appears frequently in two aspects, as a boy or adolescent, the son or paramour of the goddess, or as an older god with a beard, frequently portrayed on a bull, the god's sacred animal."[55] He has further observed, "The shrines were evidently the scene of a fertility cult, the main aim of the religion being the procreation of life, and the ensurance of its continuity and abundance both in this life and next. Sexual symbolism is absent and attention is drawn to the navel, pregnancy or scenes in which the goddess gives birth to a bull's head or a ram's head. Frequently the two aspects of the goddess are shown side by side or combined in a twin figure, one of which is giving birth. Scenes of life on one wall contrast with scenes of death on the other. A huge bull's head is frequently found emerging from the wall above a red painted niche, perhaps symbolic for the netherworld. Other heads accompany the bull and breasts are frequently shown in rows. In other cases woman's breasts are carefully portrayed, but incorporate the lower jaws of wild boars, the skulls of fox, weasel or the griffon vulture, unmistakable symbols of death. Equally symbolic is the combination of bull's horn and woman's breast, both symbols of life."[56]

The Catal Hüyük religious concepts appear to have sequential continuance, though with some overlap between the chronology of the two sites, at the late Neolithic site of Hacilar, which had only a short Neolithic culture-span of the hundred years from c. 5700 to 5600 B.C.[57] Besides other cultural traits, here a domestic cult of the Mother-goddess, standing, or enthroned on leopards is closely allied to the one seen at Catal Hüyük, though the facial features and hair-styles are quite different. "The goddess is shown seated on one or two leopards or standing and holding a leopard cub. She occurs by herself, standing, seated, squatting, kneeling, lying down or accompanied by a child. She may be shown in the nude or wearing a bikini-like garment, an apron or a long striped dress, painted in white. In the younger aspect she wears her hair in pigtails and is usually scantily dressed, whereas the older figures are more often naked and have the hair done up in a bun. Eyes are incised, but none have a mouth . . . These naturalistic statues serve as a link between those of Catal Hüyük and the later, larger and more conventionalised group from Hacilar V-II."[58] Level V at Hacilar betrays a transition from the late Neolithic into the Early Chalcolithic with the introduction of painted pottery. The cult of the goddess persisted at the site, but gradually the great variety of shapes seen at level VI came to be restricted to four main types, standing, seated with the legs on one side, kneeling or resting.[59] A new type of representation consists of "a special, and probably ritual, anthropomorphic vessel in the form of a goddess", which "is frequently provided with eyes inlaid with obsidian. The figurines are larger than in the earlier levels, and though technically perfect, they lack the naturalistic grace of those from Level VI. Figures of the goddess with a child or with animals are no longer found and male statues have completely disappeared."[60]

The goddess cultus of the Neolithic Anatolia seems to have had its influences felt outside this province in the coast of the Aegean and well beyond. For example, at the Early Neolithic site of Nea Nikomedeia in Greek Macedonia, in a large building (probably shrine) five Anatolian-looking clay statuettes were found.[61]

On the periphery of Anatolia, the rise of the Halaf culture marks the emergence of the goddess cult into its Chalcolithic phase in the early fifth millennium B.C. and beyond. The most prolific early site is Arpachiyah near Nineveh in Mesopotamia. Here numerous headless clay female figurines have been found and suggest a link with the similar statuettes from Palaeolithic times. As remarked by Prof. E.O. James, "Whether or not they were emblematic of the Mother-goddess as such, they certainly suggest the veneration of maternity as a divine principle. Some are naturalistically modelled in the round, others are flat and hardly more than a stump with no attempt to fashion the face or head. But they all emphasise the breast, the navel and the vulvar region, and almost always they are represented in squatting position, this being a normal attitude adopted in child-birth in the Middle East. Therefore, although it is debatable whether they portray the actual Goddess, the figurines unquestionably symbolise her functions and attributes."[62]

In the Halaf period such female statuettes, in a variety of shapes, are met with from the Syrian coast to the Zagros mountains. Tepe Gawra, Tell Brak (*Ill. 17*), Tell Halaf (*Ill. 18*) and Chagar Bazar are other important sites.

The Ubaid culture, that seemingly served as a prelude to the Mesopotamian civilisation, has its beginnings in southern Iraq but seems to have soon spread over the whole of Mesopotamia somewhere in the middle of the fourth millennium B.C. Now religious architecture made its full-fledged emergence. From the Ubaid deposits the popular type of clay statuettes is of a slim, standing goddess with an elongated grotesque head with reptilian features (*Ill. 20*). "The bodies are well modelled with feet together and hands at the waist, or holding a child to the breast, or sometimes resting on the hips. Bands and stripes are painted on the nude body to indicate ornaments or tattooing (*Ill. 21*), and the pubes and division between the legs are depicted by linear incision."[63] "One of the most important developments", as noted by Piggott, "was the embodiment in monumental architectural form of what must have crystallised out of developments in Ubaid religious speculation and liturgy, the concentration of certain aspects of ritual and belief in a building which transcended the household shrine with its symbolic figurines of the goddess and her beasts."[64] Through the succeeding Uruk and Jemdet Nasr phases the Ubaidian traditions seem to have contributed to the beginnings of historical Sumer (see *Ill. 20*); a continuity of the goddess worship, besides other traits, is well demonstrated by the evidence available both before and after. The prevalence of a related group of religious beliefs expressed by figurines of women, and to a lesser extent of domestic or wild animals, especially cattle, has been regarded as an important element of the peasant communities of prehistoric Western Asia. In his words, "Such figurines, normally modelled in clay but on occasion carved in stone, have an almost universal distribution in the western Asiatic peasant cultures under discussion, and occur in circumstances that suggest that their place was in the household shrine rather than in any formal temple. What relation these early examples from prehistoric contexts may have had to cults which survived to be documented in the earlier literate civilisations is hardly to be determined save in the most general terms, but we may guess two variants on the theme of the earth—mother, associated with fertility, the agricultural seasons, and rebirth, or with the Lady of Beasts, the *potnia theron*, whose cult seems attested in Anatolia as early as the sixth millennium B.C. The cults represented by these figures seem primarily Asiatic, as the figures in their household context have no real counterparts in, for instance, prehistoric Egypt, with its already distinctively African type of culture; but they occur in profusion in a large number of early agricultural communities in Eastern Europe, which we have reason to regard as westerly counterparts of the cultures now under discussion."[65]

However, no assuming evidence has as yet been brought to light which would show the prevalence of the goddess cult in early north-eastern Iran.[66] But the case seems to be a bit different in the south and south-west. As noted by E.O. James, "At Susa in Elam in the earliest settlement in the parallel sites, figures of women modelled in clay with eyes and breasts rendered by dabs have come to light, the nose and brows indicated by thick rolls stuck on the flat slab, and on an incised sextual triangle. Later, in the first Elamite period (c. 2800 B.C.) a female statuette was found on the Acropolis with one of the splayed hands placed on the stomach and the other holding the breast. Others were incised with lines representing the eyes, bracelets and necklaces with a rosette pendant in the middle."[67]

Naked female figurines with the sexual organs clearly emphasised were found at Anau in Transcaspia (in Russian Turkestan) on the fertile border of the plateau. They came from the middle strata of the South Kurgan, which has some cultural affinities with Tepe Hissar III.[68] But from earlier deposits at both the sites no such evidence is available. Prof. E.O. James has specifically pointed out that "At Anau and Tepe Hissar the marked change in pottery technique in the earlier and later settlements suggests an intrusion of new peoples into the area. Since it is in association with the new painted ware tradition and its Chalcolithic traits that the female figurines come into prominence, it would seem that the Goddess cult was introduced into Turkestan and northern Iran by these settlers. Moreover, there seems to have been contact between these early Iranian settlements on the edge of the Persian desert (Sialk, Giyan, Hissar), which were self-contained peasant communities with a uniform prehistoric culture but each having its own local distinguishing features, and those in the secluded mountains of Baluchistan on the border of India."[69]

From the recent Soviet excavations in Turkmenia, some welcome light is further shed on the distinctive presence of the Mother-goddess worship in the fifth and early fourth millennia B.C. proto-Chalcolithic and early Chalcolithic culture-complexes of Namazagah I-II. From the Dashlidji period (of eastern or Geoksyurian sites, late Namazagah I context) were recovered two female statuettes having a stunted pedestal-like lower part with a deep hole perforated on the front and showing a handless and breastless torso with highly enlarged buttocks and a small head characterised by indented nose and barely sketched eyes.[70] Almost an identical figurine is also known from Namazagah I, besides a principal type of rather realistic representation of the fertility woman. One torso from Kara-tepe (Namazagah I; western group site) shows the goddess with large breasts and obese hips and having painted decorations around the neck and girdle with falling bands. Of the Jalangach period (of Geoksyur sites, Namazagah II context) no less than a hundred fragments of female figurines were exhumed and one entirely intact specimen of them showing the painted decoration of fifteen small solar circles leads to the conclusion, in words of Masson and Sarianidi, that "the artist undoubtedly sought to convey the image of a fertile woman: the mother-goddess."[71] Similar figurines (but painted with zigzag lines on the hips) of the seated Mother-goddess type also come from Namazagah II. In one specimen a curious goat figure seems to be painted on her hip of which the symbolic significance remains only a guess. The discovery of several hundred statuettes of the Mother-goddess from the Geoksyur period of eastern sites (late Namazagah II and early Namazagah III context) affords a rich material revealing their undubitable cult implication and iconography. As observed by Masson and Sarianidi, "This is indicated by the presence of an established canonical type of figurine with the emphasis on female sexual attributes: even the most schematically modelled examples had a triangle scratched out below the stomach. Their cult significance is clearly indicated by the recovery of figurines of this type from many burials at Kara-tepe and Geoksyur."[72] Like Namazagah III goddess effigies, most of the figurines are all seated and show a type characterised by an elongated head with large nose, long neck, short stumpy arms, a narrow waist, broad pelvic region indicating also steatopygia. Several specimens show painted details and ornaments; in one case a baby is seen painted on her stomach as grasping her breasts with its hands. In a distinctive group of larger figurines the torso is modelled without arms and breasts while the narrow waist and fat hips taper into long legs bent forward. Their heads are bird-like with long necks; in some cases an elaborate applied coiffure is shown. In another type of these statuettes the distinctive details include "square shoulders decorated with applied strips of clay or little round protuberances. Their arms are either held at the side or are folded on the stomach. The torso of one such figurine is decorated with numerous little applied bosses while the breasts are in the shape of animal heads."[73]

Similar to the above, there are several representational types recovered at Namazagah III sites (c. 3500-2900 B.C.)[74] although the goddess appears in most of them to be conceived in a sitting posture. One of them shows a roughly made torso with joined conical legs bent and stubby arms lowered while the other type has no arms. The most popular group is of effigies having rather realistic modelling featured by squarish shoulders decorated with applied dots of clay, a narrow waist, broad pelvis and legs tapering into a conical shape. The face is almost bird-like with slanting eyes and large hooked nose while the highly developed headdress consists of applied details for curls and plaits with tangled tresses dangling at the back (see *Ills. 22-23*).

Of particular significance is the finding of a sherd at Kara-tepe (Namazagah III) depicting "two human figurines flanking an anthropomorphic deity which is a precise copy of the terracotta figurines discovered here."[75] Further remarkable is the fact that while the sites of the Tedzen Delta in eastern part were deserted at the close of Namazagah III period, the cultures in central area continued to flourish and both large and small varieties of seated female figurines decorated with incised and cut designs (some of them emphasising their sexual attributes) occur in Namazagah IV (c. 2900-2600 B.C.). However, an interesting type of figurine makes its appearance at Altin-tepe (Namazagah IV) and is comparable with respect to its pedestal-base to the "Zhob style" statuettes of the Afghanistan and Baluchistan sites.[76] A flattened type of female figurine with only the frontal details filled in begins to occur during this period which comes to be greatly popular during Namazagah V.

Unfortunately for India we still do not have any evidence as regards the neolithic antecedents of a cult or belief connected with the Mother-goddess. The earliest aceramic culture site in north western part of the subcontinent is Kili Gul Muhammad period I (near Quetta), with the C-14 date around 3300 B.C., and may be regarded approximately contemporary with the late Ubaid or the Uruk phase in Sumer.[77] But here at this level of antiquity there occurs no evidence for the subject under study.[78] In the Quetta area the female representations make their appearance only with the Damb Sadaat II, datable around 2500 B.C. But possibly prior to it they are initially met with in Afghanistan at Mundigak III, and show two types: 'pillar-based with outstretched arms, and a flat fiddle-shaped type with prominent breasts'.[79] But both the types are crude in comparison to the figurines recovered from Mundigak IV, which the excavator has called the "Zhob Mother-goddess" owing to their close affinity[80] with the statuettes in the Zhob valley.

Our main study with regards the Indian context begins with the Chalcolithic highland peasant communities of Baluchistan and Sind that have yielded clay female figures, supposedly representing a Mother-goddess (or Mother-goddesses), probably in her two aspects namely the gracious and the formidable. Typologically they are easily connected with the rich evidence available from the city sites of the Harappa culture. With her a bull-cult seems to be associated from the beginning of her appearance in the Zhob and Kulli cultures.

At Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, besides her numerous terracotta representations this deity or her ramifications also appear on the characteristic Indus seals and amulets. The views of several authorities on the subject, no doubt, differ as to their interpretation of the evidence available, and in general we are still on the side of subjective guess or hypothesis for the Indus script has not yet been deciphered authentically. A careful treatment of the evidence at hand and the views held by different scholars would tend to reveal that a belief in the maternal potentialities of the female was a prevailing element in the religion of the Indus civilisation. Though archaeologically the relics of the Indus culture still remain isolated from the subsequent growth of Indian culture, there seems to be no *a priori* impossibility that certain religious as well as other traits of this great prehistoric civilization had their persistence, direct or indirect, in the variegated fabric of Indian tradition. Parenthetically, we have also taken note of the female representations on Chalcolithic pottery recovered in Maharashtra, the Deccan and Malwa. Their exact significance in the context of a goddess cult is far from certain.

According to Prof. H.D. Sankalia since the so-called Mother-goddess figurines of baked clay are found only in Sind and Baluchistan and even there they are found in large numbers at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, these regions were the centres of the Mother-goddess cult.[81] This view, however, seems to be correct as far as it concerns the archaeological data available at the moment.

However, it is a hard fact that the cultural evidence gleaned from the Vedic literature cannot as yet be assigned any definite correspondence on the archaeological side. The reasons for it may be different. Several scholars have attempted to correlate the Harappan and the Vedic on diverse grounds and from differing approaches. But, however, there seems to be no direct link between the two cultures, though both may have their remote or direct survivals in the subsequent Indian tradition.

In Chapters III and IV, an attempt has been made at collecting all relevant evidence on the subject under study from the Vedic literature. Whatever useful literary material we have at present from the available texts is treated here against its proper setting, as far as possible from an objective approach, though at times certain suggestions have also been made by us as to the possible significance of a myth or motif on the basis of comparative analysis. In fact, it has been a widely accepted opinion of a good number of scholars that in Vedic religion no female deity in general was given any significant position and in certain cases only a subordinate role was allotted to them either in the capacity of mere grammatical counterparts (or "consorts") of the male divinities or as tutelary goddesses. According to this school it was only later that the cult of the Mother-goddesses, or of the Great Goddess in her monotheistic aspect, came to have its share in the pantheon with the blending and assimilation of non-Aryan (or non-Vedic) beliefs and practices. But the evidence collected in the present study would tend to show that the above view is only partly correct. And indeed it is not the first attempt of its kind that calls for a modification in the verdict given by previous authorities on the position of the goddesses in Vedic religion. Whenever previously an author freeing himself of the prevailing prejudices on the subject undertook a careful examination of the evidence at hand for the cult of a goddess or goddesses, he appears to have shed much significant light on the correct appraisal of the problem. On theoretical side, it was Bergaigne, as early as 1878-83, who suggested that a sextual dualism forms an outstanding element of the Vedic religion.

However, it was Jean Przyluski who for the first time emphasised that though in general the gods in Vedic mythology have an ascendancy over the goddesses, Aditi is clearly an exception to this rule.[82] Inspired by this approach, and its criticism by Keith,[83] V.S. Agrawala collected rich evidence on Aditi from the Vedic texts showing her to be the Great Goddess *par excellence* in the Vedic period.[84] A short study on this goddess similarly discussing her dominant role in the Vedic pantheon was recently made by M.P. Pandit.[85] But this author also, like his predecessors, does not seem to have made use of the full evidence offered by the Vedic texts for Aditi's cult. Similarly while writing on Śrī-Lakshmī's iconography in the historical period, A.K. Coomaraswamy was first to discuss profitably certain useful Vedic texts on her early appearance and character.[86] But a comprehensive treatment of the Vedic evidence for this goddess was offered only recently by Prof. J. Gonda in his work *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism*;[87] it is instructive in several ways and has been fully utilized by us in the following pages. In the same work he also collected evidence about other goddesses, namely Sinīvālī and Sarasvatī, who are connected with Vishṇu and make early appearance in the Vedic religion.[88] His comments on the problem are particularly noteworthy. He says, "If the ancient texts had paid more attention to the female half of the human and divine societies—I for one am convinced that the female divinities occupied a very subordinate position not so much in the belief and worship of Vedic man in general as in the texts which we possess—these connections would doubtless be much clearer to us."[89] This opinion will be seen largely substantiated by our study in which beside the passages utilised by this authority for the specific context of Vishṇu's relationship with the goddesses, we have made the full use of other texts also.

Apart from such instructive though short studies by some scholars, a work entitled *The Mother Goddess* was published by Shri S.K. Dikshit.[90] It was no doubt a good attempt on the subject. But owing to certain biased views and presumptions the learned author unfortunately made a mess of the entire material at his disposal from Indian, non-Indian, Vedic, post-Vedic and non-Vedic sources. In his over-enthusiasm to be exhaustive on every point he seems to have utterly failed to bring out the Vedic evidence on the Mother-goddess in its true cultural and chronological perspective. However, we have at times made use of this publication with some profit.

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12. See below.
13. But the figure appears somewhat rigid or inert in its usual suggestivity. This seems to some extent due to a 'naive' attempt on the part of the artists to make certain portions of the figure realistic or morphologically intimate.
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18. Or types.
19. A. Leroi-Gourhan, *The Art of Prehistoric Man in Western Europe* (London, 1968), figs. 270-274.
20. Ibid., fig. 271.
21. *Myth and Ritual in the Ancient Near East* (London, 1958), pp. 30, 34.
22. See Andre Leroi-Gourhan, op. cit., Fig. 437 (and its reconstruction with the lower figure as female), p. 135.
23. Ibid.
24. *Palaeolithic Art*, pl. 82, *i-k*.
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26. Op. cit., p. 113; also p. 134. A few more sentences may also be quoted here: "In the remote portions of the caves are also found the male figures whose heads are provided with a pair of bovid or cervid horns, such as the famous "sorcerer" at Les Trois Freres, the one at Le Gabillon, and two less distinct figures, one at Font-de-Gaume and one at La Pasiega (Spain). All these figures are placed in the vicinity of animals, or occasionally by themselves in some recess, but the striking fact is that their topographical positions are reversed. The males belong with the set subjects found in the depths of the cave, the females with the subjects of the central sections. We may infer from the topographical division that the male human figures, the horses, the ibexes, and the stags form a group distinct from that of the female human figures, the bison, the oxen, and the mammoths" (Ibid., p. 113).
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32. Ibid., pl. 259 *b*.
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34. Ibid., fig. 689 (Figure with raised arms).
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THE MOTHER-GODDESS IN THE PROTOHISTORIC PERIOD

THE Indus Valley has revealed a vast storehouse of invaluable evidence regarding the religious beliefs of a period of which little is known otherwise. Marshall and other scholars have claimed that the discovery of Harappan relics presents authentic material for the study of non-Aryan religions.[1] Though we cannot be certain about this supposition, yet it is a common inference of most of the scholars, and for the time being should be accepted that the material remains of Harappa culture represent the "pre-Aryan" period, and perhaps the non-Aryan.

The primary religious evidence consists in a large number of clay figurines which are generally taken as that of the Great Mother-goddess whose worship was a widespread feature presumably of all early historic periods, extending from India to the Mediterranean shores. But, in fact, it is not clear how far they refer to a common source, and whether there exists any correspondence, to a lesser or greater degree, among the types or groups dominating various cultures in different stages of chronology. The identity of the said Mother-goddess figurines of Harappa culture has been worked out on the analogy of West Asian 'iconography' of the Great Goddess or the great Mother-goddess.[2] At any rate, it is open to doubt and only remains a supposition unless established on the basis of some decisive evidence. In a few cases, they are distinct female representations, and also at times one could recognize their mother character either from the emphasis on the genital parts, or from the child in their arms, or the state of pregnancy indicated. But their divinity is hard to establish or even be made out in most of the specimens, though it can be very well detected that to some of the figurines a magico-religious efficacy, or even fertility significance, was attached.

Marshall[3] appears to have classified the terracotta females, all those having some religious significance, from Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, and the Baluchistan cultures, under the following groups:

(1) Those with children in arms (see *Ill. 40*), or in a state of pregnancy (see *Ill. 41*), perhaps ex-voto offerings with magical significance; or only apotropaic in the latter case.

(2) A distinctive and uniform Mother-goddess type, represented by the majority. It is described by him,[4] "A standing and almost nude female, wearing a band or girdle about her loins with elaborate headdress and collar, and occasionally with ornamental cheek-cones and a long necklace. In many of these figurines the ear-ornaments take the form of shell-like cups suspended by bands on either side of the head, while the headdress above is more or less crescent-shaped (Pls. xcv, 6, 7, 8 and 13; xciv, 1, 5 and 12; and xiv, 1), or ends in points as in Pl. xii, 1."

(3) Baluchistan Goddess type:

(a) Head-and-bust, only ending in a flat base; with a bird-like face, elaborate necklaces, hands on the waist or on the breasts (*Ills. 26-27*).

(b) Head-and-bust, only ending in a flat base, with a grotesque face, a sort of hood over the head, and elaborate necklaces (*Ill. 28*).[5]

From the above it is easy to deduce that the evidence offered by the Baluchistan sites, and other kindred sites in Sind, tends to provide a direct clue to the identification of the Mother-goddess cult in the village communities which are regarded as pre-Harappan in date, as well as pre-urban settlements of the Indus civilisation.[6] Of these pottery-bearing hill-villages, the dominant agricultural character is quite explicit. The origin of a Mother-goddess from the fertility needs of a peasant community appears to have been a likelihood in this culture-complex. Numerous bull figurines in terracotta were found from the Quetta, Kulli and Zhob cultures, indicating obvious agricultural as well as fertility connections of a similar nature.

From the recent excavations in the Quetta Valley,[7] among a fair number of terracotta figurines, those so far identified are all female. Fairservis has classified them into three Groups, A, B and C; Group C consisting only fragments. Group A is characterised by rather delicate applique workmanship with figures distinguished by heavy, somewhat pendulous breasts, narrow waist and broad hips. The legs are marked off by an incision which extends from just below the waist-line to their lower ends which terminate in a stem. The feet are not indicated, and the rear portion of the figurines is flat. Characteristic are the hanging necklaces over the breasts, almost covering the figure from shoulder to waist.[8] In one case, several strands of the hair are seen falling on the shoulders, a feature no less significant along with other scanty details.

The Group B consists the 'Zhob' type goddess, distinguished by a pedestal base, applique goggle eyes and a tall headdress. The pendulous breasts seem to be a trait typical of the Quetta Valley figures, though in one specimen they are mere applique dots.[9] The representation of hair tresses is interesting; in one case indicated by paint.

From the type represented by Group A, it is apparent that such effigies formed part of a goddess cult, of a rather benevolent nature contrasted to the Zhob mother. The extension of lower portion up to the knees, and an intended pronouncement on the breasts and the hips, indicate her mother nature. She might have been a delicate transformation of the same Grotesque Goddess whose worship as known from the statuettes was of a definite character widespread in Baluchistan and Sind.

The ritualistic usage of these figurines can be very well guessed from the pedestal bases. It should be, however, noted that in no case do we see an attempt at exaggerating the female buttocks and abdomen; this would lead to the conclusion, in spite of their mother nature being indicated by other secondary attributes and the pendulous breasts, that there was no idea of pregnancy associated with this goddess. Her nature seems to be that of a negative kind, terrible and destructive. But subsequently came to be also attributed with the positive element of a life-bestowing and fostering mother. This is very well guessed from the hands on breasts, or child on the lap, as found in the case of Kulli statuettes.

Associated with this nude fertility female were found mutilated clay bulls. They are remarkable for their painted designs and life-like treatment. One of them may be even theriomorphic as suggested by Fairservis.[10] Two are only bull heads; on their top between the horns is painted a characteristic ovoid pattern, extended even down the forehead. This forehead mark has been rightly identified as the *yoni* shape,[11] symbolic of the female fertility.

A reference may not be out of place here to two clay seals illustrated by

Fairservis from the Quetta Valley excavation.[12] Each shows a complex pattern, based on the arrangement of multiple "*svastika*". It might have signified the female *yoni*, conveniently rendered in the shape of a four-armed socket. If so, these objects must have served in antiquity as cult objects related to the fertility goddess. Similar tiny seals, in clay or stone, have been excavated at several other sites, among which remarkable for the present context may be two specimens from Mundigak III and Mohenjo-daro.[13]

The "eye" or *yoni* mark on the head of the bull figures determines them as sacred to the female deity.[14] The archetypal "womb" possessed by the Great Mother was an easy abstraction of her all-productivity.[15] The "third eye" appearing in later art and mythology in peculiar Saiva associations may have a possible origin in the above practice.

A curious object, found by Stein at Periano Ghundai, shows the female organ in a realistic manner (*Ill. 29*). It furnishes the only instance of a votive *yoni* yielded so far from the Chalcolithic sites of Baluchistan.[16] It had obvious fertility imports and a connection with the Mother-goddess as can be guessed from the 'ring-stones' found at Harappa and elsewhere in subsequent cultures.

It is indeed remarkable that the goddess effigy of the "Kulli type" also occurs at Bampur-Makaran in south-eastern Iran and Bakun A in south-western Iran.[17] The occurrence of both the "Zhob type' and the "Kulli type" goddess figures at Mundigak IV and Deh Morasi Ghundai IIA in Afghanistan is further noteworthy.

Two more types of the Iranian (or Pre-Harappan ?) Mother-goddess shapes are identifiable as making their appearance in the preceding period at Mundigak. While their affinity with the Iranian and Turkmenian female models appears to be well indicated, there are, however, no specimens hitherto known of their kind from the sites of Baluchistan. The first one of them shows prominent breasts, wing-like projections for arms and the lower torso rendered into a tall pillar-base.[18] The other type is delineated by a flattened fiddle-shaped figure with conspicuous breasts; the same appears to have its probable Mohenjo-daro counterpart in a rare effigy published by Mackay.[19] However, some Chalcolithic figurines of the Deccan and Central India may be said to have closer resemblance with such Mundigak examples.

A new type has now to be separated from Group A of Fairservis' classification[20] in the Quetta Valley figurines and for which the specimens are furnished by certain figurines preserving specific details of more or less variable representation but associated together by the outstanding feature of their legs or unshapely conical lower torso bent forward. It has come to be recognized from the evidence brought to light from Gumla II (Gomal Valley), Jalilpur II (near Multan), Mehergarh (near Bolan Pass), Sur Jangal (Loralai), Said Qala Tepe (Kandahar area), along with which a surface find at Damb Sadaat must also be confounded owing to the fact that it has "legs thrust boldly forward at the knee, almost at right angles to the body". For the Baluchistan and affiliated context the type may be designated as the "Quetta Valley" or the "Damb Sadaat" style Mother-goddess figure. For it the closer links as well as the cultic antecedents with certain Iranian and Turkmenistan prototypes are well demonstrable.[21]

The principal type of human figures (*Ills. 26-27*) from the Kulli sites represents the hand-modelled body of a female which invariably ends below the waist in a flat pedestal suggesting that they were intended to be set up independently on some stand or the ground.[22] The pinched-in face is rather that of a bird and the figure is grotesquely loaded with elaborate necklaces with shells or other pendants attached, and a characteristic headdress.[23] As a rule, no pronouncement is found either of the breasts or of any other portion symbolising female fecundity; in fact the lower part is omitted. The arms are akimbo with the hands resting on the waist, or on the breasts.

The over-elaborate scheme of ornamentation and coiffure may give an idea of their intended extra-human or divine nature. The uniformity of the type has also much to reveal of their definite purpose and usage in a religious context. The hen-like face of this 'goddess' conveniently makes her an avian composition, the relevance of which is beyond doubt for the female deity of fertility. The same bird face is also characteristic in the case of Harappan clay-figurines, presumably representing a kindred goddess,[24] or her Harappan 'successor'.

She is a Mother-goddess. This fact is clear from the posture of the hands placed on the breasts. The 'breast-touching' or 'breast-pressing' attitude for such a goddess appears to have been a characteristic feature both in prehistoric and historic times, defining her as the nourishing mother with the potency of nurturing breasts, symbolic of her benevolent aspect.[25] In fact, her Great Mother identity is indicated in a figurine holding two children in her arms.[26] That it is not a representation of a human mother and child is conveyed by the appearance of babies on either arm.

A few more facts may be noted regarding these Kulli goddesses.

(1) Conveniently they are divided into two groups:

   (a) The breasts quite prominent in the pieces less elaborately decked with ornaments.
   (b) The breasts are insignificant or not shown in other profusely ornamented examples.[27]

(2) No indications of dress, however, are attempted.
(3) As a rule, all figurines of the goddess were damaged in antiquity, implying obviously cast away offerings after ceremonial mutilation.[28]
(4) Large numbers of them were yielded within restricted areas at various sites. This suggests that they were offerings massed at a shrine or sanctified platform.[29]
(5) Associated with them were found terracotta bulls, no less numerous and significant.[30]
(6) At Mehi, some obvious connection of the figurines was found with human burials. Along with other objects, statuettes of the goddess were seen associated with cremated bodies. In one particular case, three figurines of the goddess were revealed placed on a partially burnt skull.[31]

This last fact suggests that the "Kulli" Goddess was regarded as at the same time presiding over death and life in her dual aspect. It seems, she held a similar function as is mentioned in a hymn of the *Ṛgveda* for the Earth-goddess. As has been alluded to, the legless bust of the type suggests a significant parallel with the later images of the Earth-goddess shown half-emerging from the ground, both in Buddhist and Hellenistic iconography.[32] The same may be a confirming clue for identifying her as the Earth-goddess, whose lower portion coincides with the earth itself on which the effigy was set up.

The plentiful finds of bull and female figurines in close association make one believe that the animal was presumably auxiliary to the Mother-goddess cult in these agricultural communities. The bull worship as part of the Earth-goddess cult is not unknown in Indian religion,[33] and also in other countries.[34] The pre-eminent function of this animal in tilling the soil, in fact, had made it outstandingly a taboo for the fertility of the land and also the fecundative potency of the siring bull was obvious to the people, to which they appear to have paid reverence both here and in the urban culture of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro.

A kindred goddess is met in the Zhob valley in the form of similar clay figurines of women[35] and bulls. But the bull figurines are, however, not considerable in number. The female type is presumably that of a 'Terrible Mother' (*Ill. 28*) whose several features may be noted.

(1) It represents a head-and-bust of a woman terminating below the waist in a little pedestal. [But see a figurine from Mehergarh showing full legs of this style of goddess figurine.]

(2) She has a high smooth forehead above her staring goggle eye-sockets, aqualine nose and grim slit mouth.

(3) From this, her gruesome hideous aspect is at once projected. In a few specimens the impression is like that of a grinning skull.[36] And thus, according to Piggott,[37] the Zhob figurines 'seem rather to be a grim embodiment of the mother-goddess who is also the guardian of the dead—an underworld deity concerned alike with the corpse and the seed-corn buried beneath the earth.'

(4) Characteristic is the emphasis on the well-modelled bust; and in several examples, necklaces are shown in a typical manner.

(5) Peculiar is the hood formed of a coif on the head and a scarf that veils sides of her face up to the shoulders. It had some definite iconographic function can be guessed from its comparison with a similar feature seen in images of the 'ring-stone' goddess, Gaja-Lakshmī and Hārītī in the early historic period.

That the figure of the Terrible Mother dominated in the religion of the Baluchistan peasant communities is far from doubt. However, there must have existed some direct or remote correlation of the Terrific Feminine with the "Fierce" Bull, painted on the Kulli pottery, often shown in exceptionally grotesque size and tethered to a post or free.[38] It is the instance of the wild beast, angry and destroying, but subdued under the control of a higher divinity, which in the present case possibly was the Mother-goddess.

It is a fact rather of anomalous nature that no specific evidence for the Mother-goddess worship has been reported so far from Kalibangan, one of the major urban centres of the Harappan civilisation.[39] There are hardly any female figurines known from this site and whatever connections we may postulate for the goddess worship here can be based on two seals, one showing a duplicate of the well-known Mohenjo-daro theme of a deity ensconced on a tree with a tiger standing below (*Ill. 57*). But the other is a unique cylinder seal showing rather an elaborate mythical scene of which the significance is not fully clear (*Ill. 58*). However, a part of the depiction shows indeed the tiger-bodied hybrid figure of the goddess familiar at Mohenjo-daro (cp. *Ill. 59*) while the remaining scene is composed of three standing figures including a female deity in the centre flanked by a deity on either side. The latter are presumably males and each of them appears with face turned to the inside and holding with his right hand the suspended hand of the central goddess close to him while making an attack on the contending rival with a long javelin raised overhead in his left hand. For a fuller appreciation of the mythical implications of the scenes some comparative material is utterly lacking at present.

Likewise the paucity of evidence at Lothal and other Gujarat-Kathiawar sites is also problematic in view of the Indus Valley position of the goddess cult, and tends to delineate her unpopularity in the region for which, however, the main background and causes remain largely unknown and thoroughly unexplained. At the most five terracotta figurines are known from Lothal to evince the existence of a Mother-goddess cult at the place, but none of them appears to represent any popular types of the Harappan culture. One specimen shows a striking resemblance with the Kulli type having a pedestal-base, conical arms, and a head with pinched out side-ornaments and lacking any applied decorations.[40] The other type represented by rest of the specimens is featured by a well-modelled body with broad shoulders, prominent breasts, stumpy arms and similar legs separating in an arch. All are fragmentary pieces and in no case the head has survived; it is noteworthy that in the more complete specimen the navel is marked.[41] However, in the physiognomical treatment this type appears to have close affinity with the Inamgaon goddess figures[42] and the common religious ties of the two cultures for this specific context may not be beyond the range of reasonable guess.

A great number of female terracottas were found at the principal Harappan cities of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. Among them a uniform type appears to predominate as delineating apparent stress on the feminine parts of the figure.[43] It has been often identified as the Mother-goddess whose worship was presumably deep-rooted in the Indus culture. Remarkable may be the observation that the majority are seen in the standing posture; wherever a female is shown in some other attitude, seated or kneeling, her religious bearing seems to have been hardly intended, e.g. kneading dough, holding a platter, with hands on knees, etc. Almost in every case nudity or semi-nudity is distinctly indicated.

The comparative rarity of male figures attaches no doubt some exceptional significance to the plentiful females as regards their purpose and popularity. Indeed, that should only be religion, if not play; the latter possibility being ruled out itself on obvious grounds. As put by Mackay, "From their resemblance to one another, and the frequency with which they occur, there is no doubt that these female figurines with elaborate headdresses and jewellery are sacred images."[44]

(1) The principal type, also significant in number, is characterised by a standing, almost nude, female figure, with closely set legs and feet, arms suspended at the

sides, wearing a band or girdle about her loins, elaborate headdress and collar and a multi-stringed long necklace. Besides her distinctive fan-shaped coiffure, her iconography includes a curious therianthropic face. The pinched up nose, applique oval eyes, and the incised mouth define her face, which may be recognised as feline, though nothing is decisive.

However, these figurines, and a few others, show a better execution when compared to other effigies and models. This fact may indicate their careful and purposive production, apparently with a set iconography. Only substantially preserved instances are illustrated here (*Ills. 30-35*).[45] A considerable number of figurines, though mutilated, also appear to have represented almost the same representative features.

That the type stands for a Mother-goddess is, in fact, confirmed from a few other connected varieties of the same representation.

A. In certain examples, on either side of the head are seen tiny cups or pannier-like objects supported by bands (*Ills. 32, 37*).[46]

B. Without the prominent fan-headdress.[47]

As is observed by Mackay, the pannier-like additions on either side of the heads are unique and "this portion is quite unique outside India, and at Mohenjodaro it appears to be confined to figures of the mother-goddess. A band round the forehead, apparently of some kind of woven material served to support them . . . In some of them, soot-like stains still remain."[48] These stains are obviously the smoke-burnt marks indicating these "cups" being used as lamps in antiquity, conceivably as part of the rite performed to the goddess.

(2) In some cases the figure is shown with a child held on her arm close to the breast (see *Ill. 40*), a feature indicating her to be the fostering Mother-goddess.[49] In one instance, there are two such infants,[50] as has been the case with a Zhob figurine.

(3) A notable class of the fertility female is found provided with a horned headdress, which seems to indicate her divine character.[51] Though, in terracotta instances this feature is to be found only in a few cases, a pair of horns is almost invariably seen on the head of human representations in seals and sealings. The horned headdress of a mutilated model acquaints us with the horns of bull serving as feature of a divinity whose sex cannot be determined from the preserved fragment.[52] Another terracotta figurine shows bust of a horned female. In this case the projections on the head are, in fact, four and appear to suggest somewhat peculiar significance attached to the headdress of a goddess, intended to appropriate her iconic character as a fertility divinity, for the horn is associated also in the Vedic texts with the fertility efficacy. As has been pointed out by Mackay, these erections on her head may be crude representations of the bird shapes. "Possibly this figurine was intended to have four birds upon the head, which most likely have been doves—a not inappropriate emblem to be worn by a figure that probably represented a Mother-goddess."[53] If so, it would lead to another fact and the figurine would form a unique instance known from the Indus Valley having bird-headdress of unusual importance.

(4) There are several clay models which show the standing goddess with some object on the head and the two hands raised up to support it (*Ills. 33-35*). That

this queer object did not form part of the headgear is notably clear in one of the examples.[54] But its specific nature cannot be recognised either in the bird or horn, for that will only explain, though not satisfactorily, the voluted sides of the shape and not the middle concave portion which seems, in fact, to depict the body contour of humpless cattle (see *Ills. 38-39*). If so, the object on the head of these females is to be identified as the schematic form of a goat or ram, with lower convex representing its belly and legs and the upper curve its back with side volutes for the head and the scut.

There is no doubt that the possible goat or ram held in the head by the figure was connected with fertility rites at Harappa, as is also familiar at other places.[55] A goat or animals of this sort are known to be universally sacrificed to the fecundative divinities. But from that, no particular association should be adduced to. A Fertility Goddess flanked by the two standing goats is familiar from Ras Shamra, dated in the late 2nd millennium B.C.[56] However, the identification of the Great Goddess with a she-goat is emphatically expressed in the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* (to be dated not earlier than the fifth century B.C.).[57]

As the evidence has been preserved from the cemetery H at Harappa, a goat or sheep was offered in sacrifice for the dead.[58] But how far this confirms the association of a ram in the Mother-goddess worship is not clear, though we may note her connection with the cremation rite from other sources. The composite goat figure appearing on seals from Mohenjo-daro appears to have a human face, not unlike that of the female figurines.[59] On Seal 430, that it represents a tutelary divinity, enjoying a subordinate position, and supplicating in therianthropic form before the Great Tree Divinity (?) is a supposition which may not be far from truth (*Ill. 52*). The secondary status of the goat-carrying bucolic goddess is a plausible induction. For further support, parenthetically may be mentioned that on Seal 430, the artist seems to intend identity of the hybrid goat and the anthropomorphic divinity shown, somewhat smaller, just below the horns of the proportionately giant animal. A distinction between the two sets of horns forming headdress of the human representations on seals has been pointed out more than once,[60] and will be discussed below.

Some other, no less significant, types of the female goddesses should be noted, though they are represented only by a few instances.

(5) The figure appears to press her breast in the well-known characteristic attitude of a benevolent Mother-goddess.[61] Cf. Kulli goddess-mothers.

(6) One instance shows the "Kulli type" legless representation (*Ill. 43*). But the hands are held horizontally.[62]

(7) Head and *yoni*-torso is another type represented emphatically (*Ill. 42*). The face is similar to that of the popular goddess. But the portion below the waist is treated in the form of a *yoni*, an extended vulviform from navel to ankles, in fact a veritable embodiment of the female generative principal being intended.

(8) A fragmentary female head showing a feline head in between two side-projections of the headgear at the back side (*Ill. 36*).[63]

(9) A fragment shows a female (?) head with an elaborate scheme of head decoration, partly preserved.[64]

(10) An injured clay plaquette shows the standing nude female, with arms

hanging down close to the body. There appears an object near her left foot resembling a lotus flower. Does the representation intend the figure standing on a lotus or in a lotus pond?[65]

A large number of aniconic objects of various sizes and materials, generally of stone, provide important evidence as regards the popularity of the fertility cult at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro.[66] Some of them are identified no doubt as phalli. Others of a similar nature show pyramidal cones of large or miniature types, representing either a stylised phallus or baetylic stones. The apotropaic and beatific nature of this class of objects is already emphasised by Marshall.[67]

The annular shapes of stone are no less numerous (see *Ills. 44-45*) and by no means their possible connection with the goddess of fertility can be altogether ruled out.[68] It is not unnatural to suppose that these represent ring-stones or *yoni*-shaped objects of presumable cult association. Their undoubted resemblance to the later stone rings having goddess figure engraved on them warrants their similar explanation.[69] The Indus "ring-stones", ranging in size from half an inch to about four feet, thus, appear to have played an important part representing symbolically the female generation, i.e. standing for the *yoni* of the fertility goddess, and offered in her homage.

An oblong sealing, found at Harappa (No. 649), is unique for its bearing on the Mother-goddess cult in the Indus religion (*Ills. 46-47*). It is executed on the two sides, obverse and reverse, showing two connected scenes of a fertility myth. It was meant for a fertility charm is evident from the six pictographic signs forming exactly the same legend on both the sides, and which possibly are part of a hymn for increase of production. There appears a nude woman at the right extremity of the obverse side (*Ill. 46*). She is shown in a curious posture, upside down with legs apart and giving birth to a plant issued out of the womb in a manner suggestive of the natural growth of plantation from the bowels of the Mother Earth. At the extreme left, there is a curious pair of animal-like figures standing face to face and perhaps engaged in a wild dance. They are regarded as animal genii,[70] tigers,[71] or pigs.[72] But it is unlikely that these represented any actual creatures. They should, however, more convincingly be identified as human beings guised like beasts, perhaps wearing a tiger's skin for a ritualistic dance performed in honour of the deity.

On the reverse (*Ill. 47*), a female appears seated on the ground with her legs placed forward. Her arms are raised as if in alarm or supplication, and the hair dishevelled in a wild manner presents a queer situation. In front of her, there stands a man armed with objects to be identified as a sickle-shaped weapon (or sword) and a ring[73] (sacred to the goddess). According to Sir John Marshall, the 'scene is intended to portray a human sacrifice connected with the Earth Goddess depicted on the other side with whom we must also associate the two genii', whom he regards to be ministrants of the deity.[74]

This terracotta sealing is obviously a magic tablet appertaining to the fertility ritual. The significance of the scene on both faces appears to have been in the representation of the actual ritual, no doubt orgiastic in character, of which certain details can be made out from the depiction.

First should come the "Woman Sacrifice". It was performed with due ceremony to the Great Goddess represented by the "Ring", here seen either held by the performer in his left hand, or just placed on the ground. We do not know whether the human sacrifice did take place in reality or was only ceremonially observed as a vestige of the older tradition. From the depiction it is not difficult to infer that the artist has left the action of the sacrificer rather in a dramatic state of incompletion. If he had intended to depict an actual sacrifice taking place, he might have shown the woman as beheaded.

Second comes the inscription reading some charm or *mantra* to be recited next. Third is the dance, probably performed by a male and a female, the husband-wife pair, disguised like the animals favourite of the goddess. A ring-shaped cult object held by both of them may be significant, if the blurred details of a sealing permit us to identify it as such.

Next in order was performed ceremonial recitation. This is perhaps the possible meaning of the inscription. This all propitiated the great Earth-goddess. The birth of vegetation is symbolically depicted by her upside down body in the birth-giving posture.

On certain bronze pin-heads from Luristan (8th-7th cent. B.C.), there appears a nude female, obviously the great Iranian goddess, with analogous features. In one case, she is in fact seen seated with legs wide apart, and producing a human child.[75] The validity of such representations in the case of an archetypal feminine, a personification unquestionably of the Earth-goddess, cannot be doubted.

Strangely enough, part of the above seal representation occurs on a prismatic seal, No. 14 from Mohenjo-daro[76] engraved on three faces. On one of the faces (face *c* of Marshall's description), there appear two dancing animals round a tree in a manner not dissimilar to the above (*Ill. 50*). Next can be recognised, though with no certainty, the worn out blurred details of the "Woman Sacrifice": lower portion of the seated lady is quite discernible—and the man somewhat inclined forward holds in his hands indistinct objects, supposedly a sword, etc. At the extreme right, a composite three-headed chimaera is visible, but proper significance of which cannot be made out in the context. The other two sides show files of animals, both carnivores and herbivores, moving from left to right in a rather religious harmony.

Almost similar is the depiction on another prismatic sealing, with the details somewhat better preserved; on one of the faces, it shows identically the two rampant animals round a tree, the two human beings acting the drama of the "Female Sacrifice", and in the end some blurred representation.[77]

One thing is convincingly clear that the animals flanking the tree are goat or deer, though in the case of Seal No. 649, the dancing figures are provided with long tails and appear strikingly like tigers. This fact and the other portrayals on the side faces of the prismatic sealings take us farther into the unknown mysteries of Indus mythology, especially those appertaining to the fertility cults.

The prism sealing No. 23 of Pl. XC in Mackay shows on one face (described as *a*) a legend in which a divinity ensconced on the tree repulses a furious tiger standing under it (*Ills. 48-49*). This scene with slight variations forms the subject of several Indus seals (see *Ills. 55-57*).[78] In these representations, the sex of the figure cannot be determined as all are only tiny and indistinct engravings. On one seal (*Ill. 60*), presumably the same deity is shown fighting with two rampant tigers on either side. But the same legend of the "tiger vanquisher" is available on Seal No. 357,[79] in a variant rendering (*Ill. 54*). Here, a wrestling trial between the deity and the tiger-monster is seen in explicit details. The figure, however, can be identified as female[80] and her divine nature is undoubted as she wears a headdress of horns indicative, as a rule, of divine or superhuman character of its wearer in the Indus mythology. She contends with the tiger-like beast, also provided in this case with a pair of horns. Behind the goddess a stylised tree is depicted. Though other features of her body could not be made out with any precision, the lower part is apparently nude and indications for the breasts will be infallibly detected on the upper body.

On Seal No. 356,[81] the figure is shown standing alone with her characteristic horned headdress, nude body and the hand held in a typical attitude (*Ills. 61-62*). The hand is raised up the shoulder in a pose with open palm as if granting security or assurance to her votaries. The same hand-pose characterises her figure in most of the representations, viz., on Seal Nos. 356, 357 and 355.

Of unusual importance is another seal from Mohenjo-daro illustrated by Mackay.[82] It shows the same female divinity, but now with a tiger's body (*Ill. 59*). As observed by him, "It is apparently a combination of a woman with a tiger's body, but not centaur-like as the forelegs are certainly human. On the head are two special horns extended laterally which might well be those of a goat or a sheep, though in view of the animal on Seal 430 they are probably of the former."[83] Rising from between the horns is a spike of flowers or leaves, noticed also in some other cases. A long pig-tail, apparently tied at the end with a bow, projects from the head in a way as to suggest that it was stiffened. The human portion of the figure is nude save for a short skirt and bangles. According to Mackay, the characteristic pig-tail worn by the figures indicates their female sex,[84] and is in fact to be regarded as a distinguishing mark of the female divinity. He further observes that it 'was not a benign nature. On the other hand, the horns imply a connection with an animal very opposite in nature to the tiger.'[85]

A theory that regards all Indus deities seen on the seals as male is not uncommon among scholars.[86] Herbert P. Sullivan[87] has recently advanced an altogether dissimilar view as regards their identification, and doubted any possibility for their male character. He thinks that even the so-called "Paśupati" is probably not a male, but a female deity, in fact, the same deity who wearing the three-pointed headdress, manifests herself in the sacred tree as goddess of vegetation-fertility. Could it be that surrounded by beasts she appears on the 'Proto-Śiva' seal in another role, namely as the 'Mistress of the Animals'.[88] According to his study all the godheads on Indus seals should be taken as female. But such an opinion seems only a mere presumption, as is true for the *vice versa* theory. Though in most of these cases, male or female attributes are not discernible either due to corrosion or owing to the fact that artists did not intend in a usual course to emphasise on this aspect of the problem while to the initiated the sex was quite apparent from other details of the representation.

In fact, most of the human figures of seal representations cannot be determined as male or female from their any unquestionable attribute. But there are certain arguments based on their closer study which appear to restrict the identification to a particular sex. To begin with, the so-called "Paśupati" Seal offers a clue of utmost significance (*Ill. 51*), and several details of the representation call for due attention. The seated, cross-legged, so-called "Paśupati" is distinctively male with his ithyphallic nature on Seal 420. On the contrary, the tree-divinity appearing inside a Pipal is supposedly female (*Ill. 52*), without any male emblem but with a distinctive pig-tail, and conceived in the standing attitude which was presumably characteristic of a female deity, for example in the terracotta figurines, according to the Indus belief. It has been observed more than once, that the male god on Seal 420, the so-called Paśupati, has three faces, one frontal and two laterally shown. If so, it will be out of question to establish his identity with the other images having single face and other divergent traits. Further, the typical horned crown on his head represents the head of a bison and in the case of all standing figures the horns are of a different variety, often incurved like goat's or deer's. The looped lock projecting from the headgear, or the so-called pig-tail, does not form a feature of his headdress while that is present in most of the standing figures, in some cases its intentional depiction is obvious without any dispute.[89]

The outstanding evidence reinforcing the above surmises is offered by a unique oblong seal, No. 303 from Harappa.[90] It shows legendary scenes on both the faces. On the obverse (*Ill. 63*), from left to right, first occurs the scene of a person repelling a tiger from the tree; second is the figure of a cross-legged divinity, so-called "Paśupati", seated on a throne. Then appear animals of indistinct features. On the reverse, there appears a standing bull secured to a trident-headed post (perhaps in the 'Kulli' manner), next to the animal are a human being, possibly a deity, and three letters of the pictograph.

The representation, on the obverse, thus, seems to show figures of the male and female deities of the Indus mythology, appearing side by side in their well-known demeanour: the one, male, seated on the throne in meditative mood, and surrounded by animals as their presiding lord; and the other, female, characterised by her favourite feat of torturing the tiger: both identified as such on the above grounds.

By far the most important depiction appears on a variety of seals showing an identical myth in various presentations (*Ills. 52-53*).[91] The one illustrated by Mackay as No. 430 has been described by him, "Here a tree-goddess or spirit, in a *pipal*-tree as shown by the shape of its leaves, appears to a kneeling worshipper behind whom stands a goat with human face (cf. Seal 606). In the register below are seven ministrants or votaries, each dressed in a short kilt and wearing a long pig-tail and a spray of leaves or a feather in hair. The tree-spirit is apparently nude, but has a pair of horns between which is a projection which was probably intended to represent a sprig of foliage like that worn by the deities on seals 222 and 235. The worshipper has a very similar headdress and like the goddess and the seven ministrants is adorned with many bangles" (*Ills. 52 and 52A*).[92]

He further observes, "Though no doubt the figure in the tree represents a goddess, the kneeling figure may also be deity as the same headdress is worn by both, or it may be an ordinary human being attired in a manner that was thought to be pleasing to the goddess. I am inclined to regard the worshipper as a goddess also, but one of lower degree than the one in the tree. The seven figures below may be deities of lesser rank, or even the daughters of the principal deity."[93]

However, there has been much conjecture about the real import of the scene in its various details.[94] Marshall has given the obverse and reverse of another sealing which illustrated this myth on both of its sides. The one side is badly defaced, but on the other there are six standing figures in the upper register, who stand hand-in-hand in a row. Below appear the kneeling human being and a mythical goat before him facing the "Pipal Arch" with indwelling divinity.[95] Still on other seal, preserved fragmentarily, are seen the seven figures standing hand-in-hand in the lower register.[96]

Thus, it is strikingly clear that the myth in question was a widely celebrated one and any plausible interchange in the position of figures was accepted. The row of standing ministrants, whether they occupied the lower or upper register, made no effect on the main legend. Similarly, the hybrid goat either preceded the kneeling figure, or was shown behind it. Even abbreviation of the scene was allowed in legitimate variations is clear from a number of other seals and amulets. Firstly, it omits the seven or six figures. Then the goat is also omitted. There are also some single representations of the stylised arch or inverted aureole-like shape with upward projecting leaves showing epiphany of the deity.

Now from them, we have the following four main features forming some interrelated legend as well as occurring separately:

(1) The "Pipal"-indwelling Goddess (*Ill. 52A*).
(2) The goat and the supplicating person.
(3) The Seven or Six figures in a row appearing in foreground or background.
(4) The offering visible on stand, or held by the suppliant.

On the basis of more than one trait, it is believed that the principal divinity is the great female deity, viz., with characteristic standing posture, nudity (with no male attribute), dangling pig-tail and also the crescent-shaped headdress. Her epiphany inside a peculiar *Pipal* arch, invariably connected with her, recognises her as the supreme Indus divinity presiding over the highest heaven as well as all plants and thereby human and animal fertility.

This all leads to an alleged view, that there existed three female divinities in the Indus pantheon, viz., (I) The Earth-goddess (or familiar personification). Mother of all growth and world. Shown on one seal in human form in the attitude of birth-giving female; her topsyturvy position in relation to the rest of representation symbolising her divinity. In her honour was performed even human sacrifice and a fertility dance by the votaries guised like animals favourite of the goddess. This all symbolised death and recurrent life in a chain action.

Sacred to her were goats and ewes, also pigs and bulls, all domestic.

In her formidable character, she was believed to have a tigrine body, and favourite to her was the game of "Tiger Vanquisher", thus she presided over wild beasts and the forests.

(II) The supreme heavenly being, standing invariably in an arch made of Pipal twigs (which nowhere can be taken to represent the entire tree), presumably feminine in attributes, with nudity, pig-tail and crescent-like headdress. Perhaps regarded absolute in nature, may be even androgynous, only descending to worldly level in the guise of lesser transformations.

(III) The group of standing figures seemingly is that of the plebeian goddesses, seven in number, or only six in one case. They are seen standing in a row, sometimes joining hands with each other. All look alike and are recognised as female from the pig-tail worn on the head by each of them. They appear to be half avian, wearing a sort of tunic and a bird's plume on the head. Their human faces are significant and the centipede pig-tail looks stiff in each case. They have apparently composite bird-bodies defining their aerial existence.

A similar row of four bird-headed human beings, standing hand-in-hand, is seen on a fragmentary Harappan sherd. They face to left and the legs are invisible, being hidden by the double underband, symbolic, according to Vats, of a river.[97] On the basis of the evidence available, it seems not unlikely that a therianthropic Goddess presided over all hideous practices and death as this specimen found from the Cemetery H area at Harappa indicates obvious burial connections. Her place was in the cemeteries and to her was sacrificed goat and other creatures. Besides her one dominant aspect her multiple transformations were believed in by the folks—sometimes three,[98] four, six and seven.

From the analogy of such kindred goddesses universally presiding over birth, immortality, destruction or death, popular even in the present day folk religions of India, we may presume that they all were regarded as sisters among themselves and always roaming in a group clasping hands with each other.

On a similar cinerary urn fragment,[99] painted in three horizontal registers, the middle one on the left, inside a partly preserved compartment shows a standing human figure, evidently a female, with one hand raised aloft and the other to her head. Beside her is a child with half raised hands. The field is occupied by two fish and a cock. The dishevelled hair, both of the female and the boy, are shown significantly in erect manner, and the gestures of their hands must have signified something meaningful. The female possibly holds her one hand in the characteristic *mudrā* of a reassuring deity. She appears to be a goddess shown along with a child signifying her motherly nature, and surrounded by fish etc. who in later mythology were associated with the fertility goddess. It is also suspected that the figure has an avian head, like other familiar [manifestations noticed above. The therianthropic iconography of this goddess seems a great possibility, and all other therianthropic females on the burial pottery should be regarded as multiple images of the same goddess presiding over death at Cemetery H of Harappa.[100]

In one scene, she stands in between two stylised antelopes or deer who are secured by the neck with a rope held in her either hand.[101] The same bird-headed goddess is shown possibly riding a peacock,[102] not unusual for such goddess in the later and folk mythologies.

Further evidence at our disposal appears to prove that the worship of similar goddesses was prevailing at several sites of protohistoric and historic antiquity. Though their mortuary character is not always there, at Navdatoli and Maheshwar they appear painted on pottery and presumably were offered homage in the domestic cults. The painted sherds from these two places are fragmentary and in cases, we see very crudely sketched females standing hand-in-hand, usually described as the dancer's group.[103] The one dominant goddess can be clearly identified in her terrifying aspect on other pottery pieces from Navdatoli. Her hideous features are far from doubt and the dishevelled erect hair locks are analogous to the Harappa representation. She holds in one case a triangle-headed long weapon, shaped after corn vegetation. The animal associated with her is partly preserved by her side on the other fragment.[104]

It may not be out of place here to mention 'dance-groups' from the rock-shelter painting at Son Bhadra[105] (in the Mahadeva Hills) and Brijpur[106] (in the Panna Distt.) both in Madhya Pradesh. The former instance illustrates four female figures who wear conspicuous headdress and stand with joined hands to each other. The recently discovered rock-painting at Brijpur, however, shows a group of seven human figures, allegedly female standing close together. They have notable bird-like faces and feathery crests on head—strikingly akin to the figures on Seal 430 of Mohenjo-daro. Their familiar character may not be an impossibility.

Some outstanding evidence revealing the prevalence of goddess cult in the Chalcolithic Deccan is provided by the recent excavations at Inamgaon, Poona district.[107] The Inamgaon unbaked clay figurines (from Period II, Jorwe Colture, c. 1300-1000 B.C.) represent a predominant Mother-goddess type showing a modelled flat body characterised by stumpy arms and legs, pendulous breasts and a cone-like head. In one case this goddess was found contained inside a clay receptacle as deposited under the floor of a house with a bull figurine (*Ill. 64*) indicating that the animal was presumably associated with the goddess as her mount. Besides, an exceptional specimen was unearthed of the goddess figure having no markings for the head. With it was associated a bull figurine as the vehicle of the goddess and the definitive pointer in this direction is the evidence of a lost device which actually served to support the goddess on the bull (*Ills. 66-67*). With respect to the cone-headed goddess a semi-circular clay-base was provided to stand the figure on it (*Ill. 65*).[108] Several specimens of similar bull figures with conspicuous hump, short horns and block legs were also found.

With the cone-headed type can be most probably confounded a Mother-goddess shape (two specimens) from Nevasa showing a similar feature for the head (*Ill. 68*). But the Nevasa figures otherwise show a distinct and comparatively abstract form having the featureless lower torso rendered into a flaring out wide base and marked by a conspicuous perforation for the navel. It has been observed that "it had a concave base, evidently made for fixing on (clay) base".[109] An identical type of conical projection for the head is to be noticed in the fiddle-shaped terracotta ideograms, perhaps representing the Mother-goddess, from several Central Indian Chalcolithic sites (*Ill. 69*). The most important find is from Bilawadi (3 miles from Dewas, Ujjain district).[110] Such types or their analogues are rather unknown in the Harappa culture (see *Ill. 43*), and their family likeness is remarkable only with certain much earlier Mother-goddess figurines of Western Asia, Iran and Turkmenistan.[111]

The applique representation on a class of Navdatoli pottery plaquettes[112] also shows a standing female, with characteristically dangling arms and stiff attitude of the body, not dissimilar to the Harappan or historic period clay-figurines of the Mother-goddess. She is entirely nude and the emphasis on her motherly attributes is hardly misleading. Similar figurine is also known to be present in the applied decoration of Chalcolithic pottery at Bahal, Khandesh district.[113]

Two terracotta female figurines from the excavated OCP site of Lal Qila, Bulandshahr district, U.P. appear to afford a new horizon of the Mother-goddess worship in the area of its discovery around the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.[114] The better preserved specimen (*Ill. 70*) represents a fragmentary head and bust with large pendulous breasts, a narrowing waist, an elongated neck, and well-defined facial features characterised by bulging eyes, pinched up hooked nose, broad jaw with protruding lips and thick chin. It is remarkable that arms were affixed in the holes made for the purpose on the shoulders, a feature known from the well-known Harappa stone torsoes. But in the other figurine arms were made with the torso as usual.

Of comparatively much later date (presumably around the middle of the first millennium B.C.) and associated with altogether a different culture of the south Indian Iron Age Megalithic burials is a solitary Mother-goddess figurine of bronze from Adichchanallur (*Ill. 71*), Tirunelveli district, Tamilnadu in the extreme southern tip of the peninsula.[115] At the present showing this figurine is evidently all alone in the area of its find as being roughly attributable in time nearer to the historic period. It is further noteworthy that the statuette is quite dissimilar to the rather ideographic shapes of the mother-goddess recovered from several protohistoric sites in the Deccan and Central India.[116] On one hand it is stylistically akin closely to the numerous north Indian Mother-goddess clay-figurines of the archaic or "timeless" designation from Mathura, Taxila and Ahichchhatra.[117] Similar to some of them this bronze figure wears a prominent zone, elaborate necklace and coif-like headdress with falling hair-locks at the back of the head. The back side of the figure is flat; though the details of hair and girdle are worked out, there is no attempt at modelling. On the other hand, along with certain archaic figurines in turn, it tends to reveal indeed remote links with the pristine and unshapely modelling of the Palaeolithic plastics and their neolithic-chalcolithic successors in Western Asia and elsewhere. Like Palaeolithic statuette of Willendorf in lower Austria or Gagarino in Russia, it shows a composition of superimposed spheroidal masses for the thighs, breasts and a featureless head, and barely sketched short arms and stump-legs.

The funerary affiliation of the goddess is again remarkable here. It may be, however, added that the funerary connection of the Mother-goddess and her "sisterly" manifestations has been well suggested also from the evidence unearthed at such early historic sites as Piprahwa (*Ills. 73-74*) and Lauria Nandangarh (*Ill. 72*), and other places.[118]

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8. Ibid., Figs. 16 a-c.
9. Ibid., Figs. 16 d-g.
10. Ibid., Figs. 18 a-b, p. 226.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p. 229, Fig. 23 a and b.
13. Fairservis, *The Roots of Ancient India*, Fig. 28 (17) on p. 129; Fig. 14 on p. 275.
14. For the "eye" mark on a bull's head, cp. Shahr-i-Sokhta parallel, M. Tosi, "Excavations at Shahr-i-Sokhta", *East and West*, Vol. 18, p. 54.
15. For example, the Great Earth Goddess is called as *yoni*. Aditi has to take eight wombs for giving birth to her eight children.
16. A. Stein, *An Archaeological Tour in Waziristan and Northern Baluchistan* (MASI, No. 37, 1929), Pl. IX, P.C. 17; Marshall, op. cit., Vol. I, Pl. XIII, 7.
17. Fairservis, *The Roots of Ancient India*, p. 225.
18. J.M. Casal, *Fouilles de Mundigak* (Paris, 1961), Pl. XLII, 10-12. Here Ill. 24.
19. *Further Excavations at Mohenjo-daro*, Pl. LXXIV, 17. See here Ill. 43.
20. One must not now take the "thrust forward legs" feature of the solitary Damb Sadaat surface find in the Quetta collection to make the essential characteristic of the Quetta figurines of so-called Group A.
21. J.G. Shaffer, *Prehistoric Baluchistan* (Delhi, 1978), pp. 81, 88-89, Fig. 38, F.R. Allchin and N. Hammond, ed., *The Archaeology of Afghanistan* (London, 1978), pp. 160-61; S.P. Gupta, *Archaeology of Soviet Central Asia and the Indian Borderlands* (Delhi, 1979), Vol. II, pp. 128-29.
22. An analogy has been quoted by Marshall, op. cit., p. 50, from Evan's *The Place of Minos at Knossos*, Vol. II, fig. 193, p. 340; and Vol. III, pp. 556 and 557 and Suppl. Pl. XXI.
23. A. Stein, *An Archaeological Tour in Gedrosia* (MASI, No. 43, Calcutta, 1931), Pl. XXXI; Stuart Piggott, op. cit., 108-9.
24. Similar pinched out face is characteristic in the case of Cyprus and Mesopotamian clay goddess.
25. S. Piggott (ed.), *The Dawn of Civilization* (London, 1961), p. 170 (fig. 37); R. Ghirshman, *Persia: From the Origins to Alexander the Great* (London, 1964), figs. 49, 56, 57, 59; E. Neumann, *The Great Mother* (New York, 1954), Pls. 9, 13, 44. For this motif in early Indian art of the historical period, see A.K. Coomaraswamy, "Śrī-Lakṣmi", *Eastern Art*, Vol. I, No. 3 (Jan. 1929), p. 181, Figs. 4, 22, 23.
26. A, Stein, *Tour in Gedrosia*, pp. 126, 162, Pl. XXII.
27. Ibid., pp. 161-2.
28. Ibid., pp. 126, 156, 160 sqq.
29. Piggott, op. cit., p. 106.
30. Stein, op. cit., chs. VI, VII, IX. E.G., at Kulli, from Trench V, were discovered 5 goddess figurines and 66 bulls; at Mehi from II-IV came 92 and 146 specimens of the bull and the goddess respectively; see pp. 126, 162.
31. Stein, op. cit., p. 158.
32. Stein, op. cit., p. 162, Marshall, op. cit., p. 49; see Foucher, *L'art du Gandhara*, Vol. I (Paris, 1900), pp. 357 ff; also E. Neumann, *The Great Mother* (New York, 1955), p. 118.
33. *AV*, IX.4.2; also *RV*, VI.44.21 where Indra is the bull of the Earth Goddess.
34. With the Greek Artemis (Farnell, *ERE*, I, p. 508), to whom the cow was never sacrificed.
35. Aurel Stein, *An Archaeological Tour in Waziristan and Northern Baluchistan* (*MASI*, No. 37, Calcutta, 1929), pp. 38, 42, 60, 75, and Pls. IX, XII, XVI.
36. Ibid., p. 60, Pl. XVI.
37. Op. cit., p. 127.
38. Stein, *MASI*, No. 43, Pl. XIII; and also Piggott, op. cit., Figs. 6 and 7 on pp. 101 and 103.
39. Sankalia, *Prehistory and Protohistory of India and Pakistan*, new edn, 1974, p. 356;

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40. S.R. Rao, "Further Excavations at Lothal", *Lalit Kalā*, No. 11, 1963, p. 28, Fig. 43.
41. Ibid., p. 27, Figs. 41, 42.
42. See below.
43. Marshall, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 49 ff, Pl. XI; Vol. II, pp. 338 ff; Vol. III, Pls. XCIV-XCV; Mackay, *Further Excavations at Mohenjo-daro* (New Delhi, 1938), pp. 258-82, Pls. LXXII-LXXVI; Vats, *Excavations at Harappa* (Delhi, 1940), pp. 292 ff, Pls. LXXVI-LXXVII.
44. Marshall, op. cit., p. 339.
45. Also see Marshall, op. cit., Pl. XCIV (14), XCV (26, 28); Mackay, op. cit., Pl. LXXIII (6, 3 and 4); Vats, op. cit., Pl. LXXVI (26), LXXVII (27, 28, 29).
46. See Marshall, op. cit., Pl. XCIV 1, 5, 12; XCV 6, 7, 8; Mackay, op. cit., p. 260, Pl. LXXIII, 3, 4, LXXV, 21-3; Vats, op. cit., Pl. LXXVII, 44, 48.
47. Marshall, op. cit., Pl. XCV 22, 25; Mackay, op. cit., Pl. LXXVII, 1; Vats, op. cit., LXXVII 50 (?), 62.
48. Mackay, op. cit., p. 260.
49. Mackay, ibid., Pl. LXXV 14, LXXVI 13; a plaquette with the mother with child, Marshall, op. cit., Pl. CLIII 25.
50. Ibid., Pl. LXXII 2.
51. The divine nature of horns has been discussed by Marshall, loc. cit., pp. 54-55; and recently by Dr. Moti Chandra, "Nidhiśṛṅga (cornucopia): A Study in Symbolism", *Prince of Wales Museum Bulletin*, No. 9 (1964-66), pp. 1-33.
52. Mackay, op. cit., pp. 266-7, Pl. LXXII 7.
53. Ibid., p. 267, Pl. LXXVI 5.
54. It has been conjectured that this peculiar headdress consisting of volute shapes on either side possibly represents stylised doves perched on the head of the Mother-goddess, for which a parallel is cited from the cretan source. But this supposition is far from truth as can hardly be seen any likeness of a dove in the above object. However see C. Fabri, in *ASI, AR*, 1934-35.
55. Khnum, a ram-headed Egyptian god of fecundity and creation, originally worshipped under the form of a ram or a he-goat (*Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, London, 1959), p. 37.

    The great Amon was regarded presiding over fertility, with the head of a ram, or a ram was living incarnation of the god (Ibid., p. 30).

    Naigamesha, a goat-headed divinity (*chhāgavaktra*) and form of Skanda is known in the *Mahābhārata* and *Āyurveda Saṁhitās*, presiding over birth. His female counterpart is no doubt met with in the Kushāṇa art. His antiquity, however, is traced in fertility rites as early as the Apocryphal portion of the *Ṛgveda* (see my *Skanda Kārttikeya*, Varanasi, 1967, pp. 15, 34, 50-52).
56. E. Neumann, *The Great Mother*, Pl. 123; E.O. James, *The Ancient Gods* (London, 1962), pp. 103-4, fig. 39.
57. Certainly Daksha and Aditi are associated as early as the *Ṛgveda*, Daksha being later rendered in art as Ram-headed. Also, *Śvetāśvatara Up.* IV, 5 f.
58. Vats, op. cit., p. 221.
59. Seal Nos. 347, 430 etc. from Mohenjo-daro; Mackay, op. cit., pp. 338-9.
60. Mackay, op. cit.
61. Mackay, op. cit., Pl. LXXV.
62. Ibid., Pl. LXXIV 17.
63. Vats, op. cit., Pl. LXXVII, 45.
64. Ibid., Pl. LXXVI, 24.
65. Marshall, op. cit., Pl. XCV 17.
66. Vats, op. cit., pp. 139-40; Marshall, op. cit., pp. 64-66.
67. Ibid., p. 61.
68. H. Cousens suggested their architectural utility (ibid., p. 61). Others think them to be of decorative significance. See other interpretations, ibid., pp. 61-2.
69. V.S. Agrawala, *Indian Art*, pp. 77 ff.
70. Marshall, op. cit., p. 52.
71. Vats, op. cit., p. 42.
72. M.C.P. Srivastava, "A fresh study of an Indus Valley Sealing", *The Indian Numismatic Chronicle*, Vol. IV, Part I (Patna, 1966), p. 59.
73. Vats (p. 42) takes it to be a shield. But if it shows a human sacrifice, the shield has no relevance whatsoever.
74. Marshall, op. cit., p. 52.
75. Roman Ghirshman, *Persia: From the Origins to Alexander the Great* (London, 1964), Fig. 57. Also Figs. 58-63; the shields with interesting depictions, Figs. 87-90.
76. On Pl. CXVI (Marshall, op. cit.). Its line rendering is illustrated by him on Pl. CXVIII 10 a-c. Marshall describes it somewhat

differently, pp. 395-96.

77. Mackay, op. cit., Pl. XC 13 (c).
78. Marshall, op. cit., Pl. CXI 355; Mackay, op. cit., Pl. LXXXII 1, XC 23, 24, XCVI 522; Vats, op. cit., Pl. XCIII 308.
79. Marshall, op. cit., Pl. CXI; *ASI*, *AR*, for 1925-26, p. 96.
80. Though from the photographs and plaster-casts available for study it may not be wise to ascertain any further.
81. Marshall, op. cit., Pl. CXI.
82. Mackay, op. cit., Pl. LXXXIX 347, pp. 338-339.
83. Ibid., p. 339.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Heras, "The Plastic Representation of God amongst the Proto-Indians", *Sardesai Commemoration Volume*; "A Proto-Indian representation of the Fertility God", *D.R. Bhandarkar Volume* (Calcutta, 1940); K.N. Sastri, *New Light on the Indus Civilization* (Delhi, 1957), Chs. II-III.
87. Sullivan, "A Re-examination of the Religion of the Indus Civilization", *History of Religions*, Vol. IV, No. 1, 1964, pp. 115-25.
88. E. Neumann, op. cit., pp. 268 ff; and compare the Mohenjo-daro depiction with that on interior plate of the Gundestrup Bowl, Jutland (in the National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen), in Pl. 733 (a).
89. These observations are no doubt of considerable help in indicating or rather supporting the identification of certain figures as female on other insufficient grounds. But this can have no conclusive claim and must be relied upon only if otherwise supported. The seated figure on Seal 420 is decisively male with *ūrdhvameḍhra* exposed with much clarity. It offers a contrast with other somewhat similar horned human figures, but with no such emphatic male attribute. It is all the more significant as the figure seems to be naked. Thus, it is presumable that such representations intend a female divinity, may be the counterpart of the phallic godhead. For example, see Seal 235 (Pl. LXXXVI, of Mackay). It is deplorably damaged tablet. The horns show, in this case, a knotted variety—encurved type—apparently of the ram's or antelope's.
90. Vats, op. cit., pp. 129-30, Pl. 303.
91. Marshall, Pl. XII 18 (Mackay, Pl. XCIV A, pp. 337-8).
92. Mackay, op. cit., pp. 337-8.
93. Ibid., p. 338.
94. See for a discussion on diverse suggestions, T.G. Aravamuthan, "Gods of Harappa" *JBRS*, 1948, pp. 35 ff.
95. Pl. CXVI 1, its line drawing is illustrated on Pl. CXVIII 7.
96. Vats, op. cit., Pl. XCI 251.
97. Vats, op. cit., p. 173, Pl. LXIX 18.
98. Mackay, op. cit., Pl. CI 2a, 3a.
99. Vats, op. cit., Pl. LXIX 3, pp. 112, 288-89.
100. Vats, op. cit., Pl. LXII 1 a-b, 2, 13; Pl. XVIII; and Seal No. 430 from Mahenjo-daro.
101. Ibid., p. 207, Pl. LXII 1 (a), (b).
102. This suitable explanation is due to Dr. Moti Chandra, "Nidhiśṛṅga (cornucopia): A Study in Symbolism", *Prince of Wales Museum Bulletin*, No. 9 (1964-66), pp. 19. He observes: "The figure in the belly only shows that the painter had not yet mastered the technique of establishing exact relationship between the rider and his mount." For further support, reference should be made to the artist's perspective followed in the primitive rock painting for depicting devoured figure by the animal who in this case lies with backward legs and downward face. N.E. and D.H. Gordon, "The Artistic Sequence of the Rock Paintings in the Mahadeva Hills", (reprinted from) *Science and Culture*, Pl. 3.
103. Maheshwar: *Indian Archaeology 1953-54—A Review*, Pl. VIII A and C; Navdatoli: ibid., 1957-58, Pl. XXXV; H.D. Sankalia and others, *The Excavations at Maheshwar and Navdatoli 1952-53* (Poona, 1958); H.D. Sankalia, "Navdatoli Dancers", *Antiquity*, Vol. XXIX (1955), pp. 28 ff; J.S. Nigam, "Human motifs on the Chalcolithic Black-on-red Ware", *Bharati*: Bulletin of the College of Indology, No. 9, Pt. I (Varanasi, 1965-66), pp. 4-7, Pl. I, 6-13.
104. Sankalia and others, op. cit.
105. D.H. Gordon, "The Rock Painting of Kabra Pahar, Raigarh State", (reprinted from) *Science and Culture* (Calcutta), Pl. II C; also refer "The Rock Paintings of the Mahadeva Hills", *Indian Art and Letters*, X, No. 1, its proto-Indus date is alleged to.
106. *Indian Archaeology 1961-62—A Review*, Pl. CXLIII A. Though a prehistoric date cannot be ascertained for all rock-shelter paintings in India, they undoubtedly offer evidence of the primitive phase of her

culture.

107. *Indian Archaeology 1968-69—A Review*, p. 19; ibid., 1970-71, p. 26; Sankalia, *Prehistory and Protohistory of India and Pakistan*, new edn, 1974, p. 448.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
110. *Indian Archaeology 1956-57—A Review*, p. 11, Pl. VI, B.
111. H. Mode, *The Harappa Culture and the West*, p. 7, Figs. 20-22; Sankalia, "Iranian Influences on Early Indo-Pakistan Cultures", *Central Asia* (ed. A. Guha, New York, 1971), pp. 67-8, Fig. 6, 1-4. For the evidence from Shahr-i-Sokhta, Sistan, see M. Tosi in *East and West*, Vol. 18, Nos. 1-2; ibid., Vol. 19, Nos. 3-4; and the Turkmenistan study, V.M. Masson and V.I. Sarianidi, *Central Asia: Turkmenia before the Achaemenids*, London, 1972; I.N. Hlopin, "Ancient Farmers in the Tedzen Delta", *East and West*, Vol. 24, Nos. 1-2, 1974, pp. 51 ff, Fig. 11, 8 and 11.
112. *Indian Archaeology 1957-58—A Review*, Pl. XXXIV, A and C.
113. Ibid., 1956-57, p. 17.
114. Ibid., 1969-70, p. 39, Pl. LI, A; R.C. Gaur, "Lal Qila Excavation and the OCP Problem", *Radiocarbon and Indian Archaeology* (Bombay, 1973), p. 156, Pl. IX. A mean date from the Thermoluminescent Test of Lal Qila sherds being 1880 B.C.
115. See P.K. Agrawala, *Early Indian Bronzes* (Varanasi, 1977), p. 47, Ills. 65-66.
116. See above.
117. See V.S. Agrawala, "Mathura Terracottas", *JUPHS*, Vol. IX, pt. II, 1936, pp. 17 ff; "Terracotta Figurines of Ahichchhatra", *Ancient India*, No. 4, 1948, pp. 106 ff; Marshall, *Taxila*, Vol. II, p. 440.
118. See below. For a useful discussion on the material available from anthropological studies, refer D.D. Kosambi, *Myth and Reality: Studies in the Formation of Indian Culture* (Bombay, 1962), pp. 82 ff.

THE ROLE OF MOTHER-GODDESSES IN THE ṚGVEDIC RELIGION

IT is a commonplace in the study of Vedic religion to observe that the goddesses played only a subordinate role in the pantheon; the principal deities were exclusively male, and it was solely by virtue of their position as consorts of these male deities that the female divinities acquired their influence.[1] No doubt, in the Ṛgvedic pantheon, male gods like Varuṇa, Indra, Agni, Sūrya and others predominate; this fact has often been explained by the anthropologist's answer that it was mainly due to the patriarchical pattern of Vedic (or Indo-Aryan) society. Whether or not, a Mother-goddess cultus, on the other hand, owes its origin to the matriarchical system of societies[2] is a problem with which we are hardly concerned here while discussing the position of goddesses in the *Ṛgveda*. The above view, expressed and endorsed by many a scholar, as regards unpopularity of the goddess cult in Vedic society, especially the earliest known from the *Ṛgveda*, can have any real substantiation or criticism only from the evidence available. A.K. Coomaraswamy, while discussing the symbolism of the Aśvamedha rites, made the following remarks *en passant* on the position of the goddesses in Vedic religion against the opinion held on the problem by Macdonell, "The point we have to bring out at present is that it is the bias of personal taste and consequent wishful thinking, and not a scientific objectivity, that underlies the statement "had nothing to do with Vedic religion"; an a priori judgment that may be compared with Macdonell's egregious "Goddesses occupy a very subordinate position in Vedic belief and worship", and treatment of Aditi as occupying an "anomalous position"(!) in RV, which is possible for him, because he sees in the Magna Mater nothing but "the personification of a pure abstraction"."[3]

It is true that the worship of goddesses does not form the core of the religion gleaned from the present hymnal anthology of the *Ṛgveda*. Nonetheless, the role of female divinities seems to have been of no low significance in the Ṛgvedic religion as can we know from the body of material set forth and discussed below.[4]

A. Bergaigne, the great French scholar, elaborated a view in his *La Religion Vedique* (Paris, 1878-83) which considers sexual dualism or antithesis as an important element of Vedic worship.[5] For example, the Sun is male and the Dawn is female. Another masculine-feminine pair is that of Dyaus and Pṛthivī. However, this theory does not take us far as regards the individual character of these divinities which only *prima facie* seem to represent this antithesis. There is no argument which can make us believe that the Dawn is feminine just to stand antithetic to the Sun. Similarly the other outstanding instance of this theory also does not sufficiently account for such a view. Dyaus and Pṛthivī (Heaven and Earth) form the parental pair of Vedic divinities and in most of the passages the one is hardly separable from the other. Their sexual individuality is often merged together, and in several passages both are spoken of as females or 'mothers'. This fact no doubt leads us to a specific point as regards the assumption of goddess worship in Ṛgvedic religion. To wit, it clearly indicates the tendency at work according to which the female deity had already emerged to prominence over her male associate in such a widely recognised divine parental couple of the Sky-Father and the Earth-Mother, known to be of Indo-European antiquity.

Heaven and Earth: The Parental Pair

The heavenly family of the *Ṛgveda* has for its parents Dyaus and Pṛthivī, the personified Sky-Father and Earth-Mother Dyaus has been recognised as the supreme god amongst the Aryan deities, going back in antiquity to the Indo-European age, and from that postulated period to have been inherited by several peoples.[6] Dyaus has been regarded to occupy in that period a position pre-eminent over all the gods, and much of that old personality of his was retained in the Hellenic theology. But in the early Vedic period we see a decline in his so-called original greatness; he appears in a 'faded and vanishing form in the Vedic age'. He occurs in the *Ṛgveda* as a mere name of the physical sky, the personification being advanced not beyond the rudimentary stage.[7] Though in the *Ṛgveda* alone the word *dyaus* occurs no less than five hundred times,[8] it is in most of the cases hardly more than a designation of the 'shining' (from root *dyu* 'to shine') sky, without any mythical implication in particular.[9]

Dyaus as personified heaven is the parent; Ushas, Agni, Sūrya, the Maruts, Parjanya[10] and the great Indra being his children.[11] But his paternity is implied only by his association with the Earth-Goddess, with whom he is generally coupled. In conjunction with her he is celebrated in six hymns. Their worship is so much linked together that the two appear normally in the dual compound, *Dyāvā-Pṛthivī*, Heaven-and-Earth. The conception of the parenthood of Heaven and Earth is found in mythologies of many countries and is believed to be of high antiquity. Their function as the parents of the gods and mankind is often eulogised in the *Ṛgveda*. But there is hardly anything in the hymns as to celebrating an independent personality of Dyaus. In his function of universal parenthood, in fact, he falls behind the goddess Earth. His masculine attributes are more or less found merged with the dominant motherhood personified by the lady of Earth.

In some of the passages, the Heaven is styled as father (*dyaus pitā*), and the Earth, mother (*pṛthivī mātā*).[12] Both conjointly are spoken of as progenitors of men and plants, and given exclusively the significant epithet *devaputre* 'having gods for their children' (I.185.4.; IV.56.2; VII.53.1). But in the *Ṛgveda* the notion of paternity ascribed to Dyaus as the divine father is, however, found mentioned only in combination of the Earth as the divine mother. Strangely enough in several passages Heaven and Earth are spoken of as two maidens[13] or mothers.[14] In RV X.64.14,[15] they are addressed as 'the mothers and mighty goddesses who uphold with their support both gods and men'. In RV X.59.7 Dyaus alone is called a *devī* or goddess and invoked to restore vitality along with the goddess Earth and others. As observed by Macdonell, 'In about 20 passages the word *dyaus* is feminine sometimes even when personified.'[16] This beyond doubt goes to show the pre-eminence of mother-goddess Earth over her originally and essentially the male counterpart Sky-god to the extent that even the sex of the latter got confused with the former, who was, it appears, now in ascendency in the Ṛgvedic pantheon.

In the beginning at first both were united as one (RV X.55.1). But they are said to have been fashioned out by a divine artificer, the most active and skilful of the gods, into two world-halves.[17] Thus it is an anomaly that the universal parents themselves were begotten by a father. Seemingly, the principal trait in the personification of Dyaus as father was, however, not taken seriously in the *Ṛgveda*, and his fatherhood appears to be nothing more than a faded out myth in contrast to the dominant motherhood of the goddess Earth or Pṛthivī.

The function ascribed to the Heaven and Earth in the *Ṛgveda* has hardly developed more than what has been noted above. Whatever came within the sphere of the sky and earth was conceived of as their offspring. As the universal parents they are the 'ancient-born' (*pūrvaje*) and their existence is a presupposition of everything else.[18] But in an expanding stage of overwhelming mythical statements, even the primeval pair of Dyāvā-Pṛthivī is spoken of as being created by some Great Father,[19] or by Indra,[20] who is originally their son.[21] Dyaus is regarded as the father of Indra, but it is so destined that Dyaus is to be replaced by his son Indra as regards the attribute of fatherhood. It is said that from his own body Indra produced his father and mother.[22] As has been aptly observed by E.O. James, "it is not improbable that Indra came to occupy a position of the more ancient Indo-European divinity, Dyaus, and that as his consort Pṛthivī retained many of the attributes and functions of the Earth-mother, it was she rather than her husband who was the chief object of devotion in the cultus."[23]

This must be viewed as an instance to the nature of ascendency of goddess cultus in the early Vedic period that, in fact, brought about the transformation of 'male' Dyaus into a female divinity. It should further be observed that the female form of Dyaus assumed gradually all the more prominence particularly in the contexts where Dyaus figures singly as a goddess quite independent of the rudimentary notion of the Heaven-Earth parenthood.[24] Of such passages in which Dyaus occurs as a female, two are of exceptional interest here. At both the occasions, Heaven is, however, mentioned as 'Dyaur-Aditiḥ'[25]; this expression at least in RV X.63.2 doubtless implies that Dyaus was assimilated to Aditi for this 'Dyaus-Aditiḥ' is explicitly spoken of as the Mother (*mātā*), who "lofty like a mountain, swells with sweet milk for the gods".[26] According to Bergaigne, "In this verse and in the preceding one, X.63.2, according to which the same gods are born from the earth, from the waters and from Aditi, the third word having taken the place of heaven, which we might have expected in a set phrase of this type, we can understand the transition of the idea from the *aditi*, heaven, to that of Aditi, mother of the Ādityas."[27] But the case may be otherwise. As shown by Bergaigne himself, Aditi is sometimes also equated, in the same manner, with the Heaven-Earth pair and this would hardly allow us to argue that Aditi personified heaven and earth.[28] We have no evidence to show that Dyaus originally was a goddess. Following Bergaigne's line of arguments, this particular aspect of 'Dyaur-Aditi' would indicate the natural basis of Aditi's personification as heaven (*dyaus*), who, i.e. Dyaus, though originally a dominant male god, subsequently came to be regarded as female under the name (*Dyaus-*) Aditi, Infinite.

But such a position for the goddess Aditi does not appear to have any substantiative evidence either in the *Ṛgveda* or later. On the other hand, the point involved is quite simple and consistent. We are to find in the above two verses an express reference to the female Dyaus whose altogether transformed or 'new' status of a goddess is brought out unequivocally and, of course, celebrated by identifying 'her' with Aditi, the Great Goddess *par excellence*.

Classification of the Ṛgvedic Goddesses

Prof. H.D. Griswold is the only Western scholar known to us who ever attempted at a classification of the Vedic goddesses as independent of male divinities. In his work, *The Religion of the Ṛgveda* (Bombay, 1923, p. 103), he has suggested the sub-division of the goddesses in the Ṛgvedic pantheon into the following three groups:

> "(a) those having a natural basis, as *Uṣas* 'Dawn', *Sarasvatī* the deified 'Sarasvati' river, *Pṛthivī* 'Earth', *Rātri* 'Night', *Pṛśni* the 'mottled' storm-cloud and *Vāc* 'Speech';
>
> (b) abstract feminine nouns personified as goddesses, e.g. *Puraṁdhi* 'Plenty', *Iḷā* 'Nourishment', *Dhiṣaṇā* 'Abundance', etc.;
>
> (c) goddesses as wives of the great gods, as *Indrāṇī*, *Varuṇānī* and *Agnāyī*. The great gods are furnished with wives in order to make the parallel between the human race and the divine race complete. No public functions are ascribed to them. They are 'house-wife' deities, Mistress Indra, Mistress Varuṇa, Mistress Agni."[29]

This classification, however, remains incomplete unless we add a group of other powerful female divinities, no less eminent than the above ones, namely Aditi, Sinīvalī, Virāj, the team of Seven Mothers or Sisters, Araṇyanī, Kuhū, Anumati, Rākā. Some of these names appear associated with a natural basis though that has by the time of the *Ṛgveda* already become remote and faint. For example, Aditi predominates as the mother of gods and her character has already grown far beyond her rudimentary element. Similarly, Sinīvālī basically being the name of a lunar mansion has extra-ordinarily been given the functions of a fertility goddess invoked with due ceremony and also in a group of other goddesses.

For the third category of Griswold's classification it may be added that in a passage of the *Ṛgveda* itself, all the Thirtythree Gods are said to have their consorts.[30] On the analogy of the human race, each god has or may have a female counterpart, but in most of the cases in the Ṛgvedic pantheon this category of goddesses is just non-functional and they lack any individualistic status.[31] As an exception should be mentioned Rodasī, who at some places stands somewhat independent of her male counterpart and has a function as the mother of the Marut hosts.[32] Though there is Pṛśni mentioned as the regular mother of the Maruts, the goddess Rodasī,[33] appears to be related with them through Rudra their father either as their mother or their beloved.

It should, however, be admitted in the beginning that the character of a Mother-goddess does not qualify each of the female divinities listed above. In certain cases, even their feminine nature is hardly functional and sometimes merely 'grammatical'. But the mother character is explicit in the case of the goddesses such as Aditi, Pṛthivī, Pṛśni, Vāk, the Waters (Āpaḥ), Sarasvatī and even Ushas, and appears to be the determining factor of their personality and prominent position in the Ṛgvedic worship. According to the view expressed in RV X.63.2, there were three archetypal 'divine mothers' from whom all the gods worthy of obeisance, adoration and sacrifice took their birth, namely (1) Aditi, (2) Pṛthivī, and (3) The Waters.

Aditi is the Great Mother *par excellence* of Ṛgvedic religion. In RV II.40.6 she is lauded as the mother of gods and is often identified as the primordial cow,[34] thereby implying that basically she was considered to be an exemplar of the 'nourishing' mother. The two basic principles of elementary motherhood were, according to the Ṛgvedic belief, represented by the Earth and the Waters themselves. The goddess of Earth is the 'birth-giving' mother of all plant, animal and human kingdoms—this view pervades almost every religion ancient and recent alike.[35] The personified Earth Mother was worshipped by the Ṛgvedic people as making a pair with Dyaus the Father Heaven. Both conjointly are celebrated as the parents of the gods, and though the Earth-goddess dominates in the pair, it is only later in the *Atharvaveda* that we see her as an independent personality of pre-eminent status. It is also not difficult to make out that the prototype of an Earth-goddess was operative at the back of certain personifications such as Aramati[36] and Padyā.[37]

"The Waters are our Mothers" (RV I.23.20; X.17.10) is an emphatic statement made by the seers.[38] It leads us to another fundamental element of the motherhood observed in the fertile potencies of water. Elsewhere it is proclaimed, "Waters are the eternal mothers."[39] Indeed, there are four hymns in the *Ṛgveda* dedicated to the invocation of the Waters as goddesses (Devīḥ Āpaḥ).[40] The Mighty Waters are said to have contained in their womb the Universal germ[41] and to have produced Agni as the first principle of life. The Āpaḥ Goddesses appear to signify a stage of cosmogonic manifestation. But they have little personality and the basic element is always understood in their description.[42] Their function in the capacity of primeval source of creation[43] qualifies them as the cosmic mothers from whom *in principio* everything is supposed to derive its origin. Besides, there is another category in which this natural element was given the status of celestial mothers, namely in the form of rivers and pools. The personification in such cases is, however, well evolved and imputed with significant attributes. For example, Sarasvatī, Rasā[44] and the Apsarases.

Besides the above three personalising entities in the origin of Ṛgvedic Mother-goddesses, we see a remarkable tendency in some cases as inducing 'special' mother character. In a class of female divinities, it is rather a convenient expression to call the supreme or important one of the class as their mother. Thus, Sarasvatī becomes the mother of all floods.[45] Likewise, Araṇyānī the presiding Lady of Forests is regarded the mother of all sylvan growth.[46] The goddess of Dawn is the mother of light-rays.[47] In the same way, the Herbs (Oshadhīs) are called not only goddesses but also 'mothers' to assert their position in the plant kingdom.[48]

Yāska's Classification

According to the age-old triple classification of Vedic divinities, as it has been alluded to even in the *Ṛgveda* (I.139.11) and the *Atharvaveda* (X.9.12) and that was followed by the oldest Vedic exegetist Yāska (c. 600 B.C.) in the *Nirukta* (7.5), all Vedic deities, whether male or female, can be grouped under the three divisions of terrest , intermediary (or aerial) and celestial. With reference to this threefold division the goddesses named and discussed by Yāska, mainly those only which occur in the *Ṛgveda*, as to their etymological significance and cogitational nature are as follows:

I. TERRESTRIAL (*Pṛthivī-sthāna*)

1. Agnāyī (7.8; 9.33)
2. Pṛthivī (7.8; 9.31)
3. Iḷā (7.8; and also under Tisro Devīḥ, 8.13)
4. Ushāsānaktā, Dawn and Night as dual deity (8.10)
5. Tisro Devīḥ (8.12-3): Iḷā, Bhāratī, Sarasvatī
6. Nadyaḥ, Rivers (9.25)
7. Āpaḥ, Waters (9.26)
8. Oshadhayaḥ, Herbs (9.27)
9. Rātri, Night (9.28)
10. Araṇyānī (9.29)
11. Śraddhā (9.30)
12. Apvā (9.32)

II. AERIAL or INTERMEDIARY (*Madhyama-sthāna*)

1. Aditi (11.23)
2. Saramā (11.24)
3. Sarasvatī (11.25-26)
4. Vāk (11.27)
5. Anumati (11.29)
6. Rākā (11.30)
7. Sinīvālī (11.31)
8. Kuhū (11.32)
9. Yamī (11.33-4)
10. Urvaśī (11.35)
11. Pṛthivī (11.36)
12. Indrāṇī (11.37-38)
13. Gaurī (11.39-40)
14. Gauḥ (11.41)
15. Dhenu (11.42)
16. Aghnyā (11.43)
17. Pathyā Svasti (11.44)
18. Ushā (11.46)
19. Iḷā (11.48)
20. Rodasī (11.49-50)

III. CELESTIAL (*Dyu-sthāna*)

1. Ushā (12.5-6)
2. Sūryā (12.7)

3. Vṛshākapāyī (12.8)
4. Saraṇyū (12.9)
5. Pāvīravī Vāk (12.30)
6. Pṛthivī (12.30)
7. Devapatnyaḥ (12.44-46): (i) Indrāṇī, (ii) Agnāyī, (iii) Aśvinī, (iv) Rāṭ (Rāj), (v) Rodasī, (vi) Varuṇānī.

From the above list it is apparent that several goddesses owing to their multiple activities were, however, to be considered as belonging to more than one sphere; e.g. the names of Pṛthivī and Ushas appear in all the three spheres, those of Iḷā and Sarasvatī in the terrestrial and the aerial, those of Indrāṇī and Rodasī in the aerial and the celestial. Notwithstanding this overlapping owing to the mythical conceptions of the goddesses, as it is also true in the case of the male divinities under the above threefold order of classification,[49] there has been, however, no further satisfactory classification as yet suggested for the Ṛgvedic goddesses, or Vedic goddesses in general. Moreover, there are several other goddess names which require to be added to the above list followed in Yāska's treatment of Vedic divinities. The late Madhusudana Ojha of Jaipur, one of the greatest pundits of Vedology in modern times, regarded Vāk as the principal female element who has three representative goddesses—Iḷā, Sarasvatī and Bhāratī—invoked as Tisro Devīḥ in the Āprī hymns of the *Ṛgveda*.[50] These three goddesses are in fact, according to him,[51] three appellative names of Vāk in terms of triple space-division, that is, Iḷā of the terrestrial, Sarasvatī of the aerial and Bhāratī of the celestial,[52] who have further diverse forms or manifestations according to differences of functions: 11 of Iḍā, 22 of Sarasvatī and 6 of Bhāratī. Thus, in his own characteristic way, he seems to have put forth the following classification of the Ṛgvedic goddesses:

I

11 Iḍā names of
First Sphere

1. Nadyaḥ
2. Āpaḥ
3. Aushadhayaḥ[53]
4. Araṇyānī
5. Rātri
6. Śraddhā
7. Ushā
8. Sarasvatī
9. Pṛthivī
10. Apvā[54]
11. Agnāyī[55]

II

22 Sarasvatī names of
Intermediary Sphere

1. Aditi
2. Vāk
3. Sarasvatī[53]
4. Durgā-Gaurī[54]
5. Yamī
6. Indrāṇī
7. Saramā
8. Romaśā
9. Urvaśī
10. Ushas
11. Sinīvālī
12. Rākā
13. Anumati
14. Kuhū
15. Gauḥ
16. Dhenu
17. Aghnyā
18. Pathyā Svasti
19. Rodasī
20. Devapatnyaḥ
21. Iḷā
22. Pṛthivī[55]

III

6 Bhāratī names of
Highest Sphere

1. Ushā
2. Sūryā[53]
3. Vṛshākapāyī
4. Saraṇyū[54]
5. Dyaus
6. Pṛthivī[55]

For the sake of distinct reference to individual nature and rudimentary specification of each of the Ṛgvedic goddess names, we may follow the triple classification in a rather modified setting as keeping further in view the following points of consideration:

1. The goddesses should be listed according to their single or host (*gaṇa*) nature. The fifth chapter of the *Naighaṇṭuka*, the text on which Yāska comments, seems to have profitably adopted this analysis as a guiding factor in enlisting the deities.

2. According to their relative status as the (a) higher (following Pt. Ojha, the goddesses who are lauded in complete hymns exclusively dedicated to them, *sūkta-bhāk*); (b) lower (who are lauded in sporadic verses only, *ṛg-bhāk*); and (c) minor goddesses (who find only accidental mention in the text, *nipāta-bhāk*).

3. According to the main idea underlying their personifications, i.e. derived from (i) the forces and phenomena of nature, (ii) abstract concepts and beliefs, (iii) artificial objects and implements, (iv) 'grammatical names' as wives of the great gods.

In the light of the above analysis, the goddesses known from the *Ṛgveda* may be treated in a triple classification as follows:

I. TERRESTRIAL

(*A*) *Eminent Nature Goddesses*

1. Pṛthivī The Earth Goddess
2. Rātri The Night Goddess
3. Sarasvatī

(*B*) *Abstract Goddess Personifications*

4. Iḷā ("Offering" or "Nourishment")
5. Bhāratī
6. Mahī (The "Great")
7. Varūtrī (The "Protecting")
8. Hotrā ("Invocation")
9. Ūrjāhuti ("Strength-oblation")
10. Śraddhā ("Faith")
11. Sūnṛtā ("Bounty")
12. Dakshiṇā ("Gift")
13. Deshṭrī (The "Disposing")
14. Joshṭrī (The "Fostering") (in dual)
15. Ūrmyā (The "Undulating")
16. Asunīti ("Spirit-life")
17. Puraṁdhi ("Plenty")
18. Aramati ("Devotion")
19. Nirṛti ("Decease")
20. Arātī ("Malignity")

(*C*) *Tutelary Goddesses*

21. Dhishaṇā ("Plenty of the Bowl")
22. Araṇyānī The Forest Goddess
23. Sītā The Furrow
24. Urvarā The Arable Field
25. Apvā (a goddess presiding over certain sickness)

(*D*) *Plural Goddess Personifications of Natural Phenomena*

26. Āpaḥ The Waters
27. Nadyaḥ The Rivers
28. Oshadhayaḥ The Herbs

(*E*) *Collective* (*or Host*) *Goddesses*

29. Tisro Devīḥ The Three Goddesses
30. Sapta Mātaraḥ The Seven Mothers
31. Sapta Svasāraḥ The Seven Sisters
32. Apsarāḥ The Apsarases

(*F*) *Female Assumptions* (*or "Wives"*) *of the Male Deities*

33. Agnāyī (of Agni)

II. ATMOSPHERICAL

(*G*) *Eminent Nature* (*Lunar*) *Goddesses*

34. Sinīvālī
35. Rākā
36. Kuhū
37. Anumati
38. Guṅgū

(*H*) *Abstract Goddess Personifications*

39. Aditi
40. Diti
41. Dānu
42. Vāk
43. Urvaśī

(*I*) *Tutelary Goddesses*

44. Pathyā Svasti

45. Pṛśni Cow the Speckled
46. Gaurī Cow the White
47. Aghnyā Cow the Inviolable
48. Saramā (n. of the Bitch of Indra or gods)

(*J*) *Female Assumptions (or "Wives") of the Male Deities*

49. Indrāṇī (of Indra)
50. Rodasī (of Rudra)
51. Yamī (of Yama)

III. CELESTIAL

(*K*) *Eminent Nature Goddesses*

52. Ushas The Dawn
53. Sūryā The Sun-maiden
54. Dyaus The Sky-maiden
55. Bṛhaddivā The Broad-sky

(*L*) *Abstract Goddess Personifications*

56. Virāj ("Ruling-principle")
57. Śavasī ("Mightfulness")
58. Saraṇyū (The "Swift")
59. Vṛshākapāyī (The "Female Ape")
60. Rāj (or Rāṭ) The Radiant

(*M*) *Female Assumptions (or "Wives") of the Male Deities*

61. Varuṇānī (of Varuṇa)
62. Aśvinī (of the Aśvins)

(*N*) *Collective (or Host) Goddesses*

63. Devapatnīḥ or Gnāḥ The Wives of the Gods
64. Viśve Devīḥ The Wives of All Gods.

The Goddess-Mother Earth

The Earth Goddess represents the female principle dominating in the above *Dyāvāpṛthivī* pair as mother of Dyaus' children. She is said to be fertilised by Heaven, and produces life in the world, firstly giving birth to various phenomena of nature, secondly to human, animal and plant kingdoms, and thirdly in a recurring scheme providing food for them. The goddess of Earth usually personified under the name of *Pṛthivī* is not much developed in the *Ṛgveda* beyond the stage of the 'special god'. Her obvious natural basis is always remembered and that always checks her 'personalisation'. It is not till the time of the *Atharvaveda* that she is celebrated as an ascendant goddess, but there also her material nature is not lost sight of. She alone has little of particular significance as regards her mythical or religious aspect. It is only in the association of the Sky god that their pair is highly spoken of in the *Ṛgveda.*

There is only one single short hymn dedicated to her in the *Ṛgveda* (V.84. 1-3), where she is the goddess Earth named *Pṛthivī,* differentiated from the physical earth (*bhūmi*); the Earth goddess and the material earth being held here distinctively are commented upon by Sāyaṇa as '*dvirūpā pṛthivī*'. The particular stanza says, "O Pṛthivī, you bear mountain-piercing tool (or thunderbolt). Rich in torrents, O Mighty One, you quicken the earth (*bhūmi*)." Here she is not only held responsible for the germination of life on the physical earth, in which aspect she might have been regarded as the goddess of Earth pure and simple, but also wielding the thunderbolt. This latter attribute may indicate a blending of the two concepts, one of the potency of the earth of producing life in the world, and secondly the rain coming down on earth, in torrents, with the 'thunderbolt' (or lightning), and being responsible for the burst of vegetational growth.

The thunderbolt mentioned here with the Earth goddess is probably an attribute which originally belonged to Dyaus and from him also ascribed to his rather inseparable counterpart in certain cases. At several places Dyaus is furnished with a thunderbolt (e.g. RV IV.17.3), which has evidently a reference to the lightning sky as is the case with Zeus and Jupiter of classical mythology.

This hymn clearly shows that she was considered the mother-goddess responsible for the fertility of soil. She, in fact, appears here as presiding over the vegetational birth on earth from which her functions were considered twofold, firstly as the embodiment of eternal motherhood, and secondly as quickener of the seasonal growth by regular rains.

Not only is she mother of the plant kingdom, but also of human kind. This aspect though mentioned in several of the Ṛgvedic passages addressed to Dyāvāpṛthivī conjointly, is attributed to Pṛthivī alone only in the *Atharvaveda.* But presumably she was invoked to bestow offsprings as early as the *Ṛgveda* as one can conveniently infer from the passage where she is prayed on the contrary to take her dead sons back to her bosom.

She is addressed in this particular hymn as Mother Earth, kind and gracious, and a power which protects and preserves the dead human body from Nirṛti or Decay.[56] She is asked to shroud with her cover the departed man like a mother covering her child. Possibly a detail of various burial rituals performed in the Vedic period is furnished in some of the stanzas of this hymn. Some scholars have even analysed and tried to correlate them with the evidence available from the excavations at Lauria Nandangarh, Piprahwa and elsewhere. The significant verse reads as follows:

Ut te stabhnāmi pṛthivīṁ tvat parīmaṁ logaṁ nidadhanmo ahaṁ risham (RV X.18.13)

"I keep off the earth or *Pṛthivī* above thee, while over thee I place this clod of earth. May I be free from injury." The practice of laying along with the dead or his relics an effigy of the great goddess, if she is to be identified with Pṛthivī (or the Earth) of this hymn, thus will go back to the Ṛgvedic antiquity.[57]

At any rate, here we have a clear mention to the one significant aspect of the personified Earth goddess as presiding over death and keeping away the influence of Nirṛti the Death or Destruction personified. Her invocation by Vedic people to counteract Nirṛti is also alluded to in another passage[58] where she is prayed to restore the vital spirit (*asu*). Further it is not difficult to identify her as the Youthful Maiden, well-shaped and beautified with four locks[59] (or cowrie-shells) etc. and as invoked to influence over the class of Nirṛtis.[60]

It is said, the Mother Earth lies recumbent *vis-a-vis* the Father Sky or Dyaus, forming as if two inverted bowls facing each other.[61] The phrase used here is *uttānā*, which appears connected no less significantly with the Earth goddess.[62] Though the exact meaning of the expression is uncertain, it is from Uttanapada that the Earth is said to have been produced, and thereby she gave birth to the Directions (*Āśās*),[63] which, often counted as ten, became her daughters, of whom there is frequent mention as the Ten Sisters.[64] She lies on her back with uplifted legs only for producing new generation. This fact is indeed hinted at in a mantra saying that when made prolific straight she recumbent (*uttānā*, or with legs wide apart) gives birth to the Steer.[65] But it is hard to infer that this description in any way points to some iconographic trait of the Earth goddess.[66]

In RV V.43.14, the place or seat of the mother is lauded to be refulgent and the highest (loftiest) (*mātushpade parame*). Her outstanding exemplar is the Mother Earth prayed to have no ill thought for her devotee.[67]

Invulnerable status of the Earth Goddess is not difficult to recognise in the *Ṛgveda* where her several other names and manifestations are also found. Aramati often appears as the genius of devotion and active piety,[68] but in certain cases it is far from doubt that she personified the earth (*mahī mātaraṁ*)[69] like her Avestan counterpart Spenta-Armaiti the Spirit of both Wisdom and Earth.[70]

According to Sāyaṇa, in RV III.55.14 it is the Earth which is mentioned under the name *Padyā* as the Great Cow Mother of manifold beauties licking her calf the Sun. Sāyaṇa has explained the Great Mother Rasā mentioned in RV V.41.15 as a form of the Earth; but she is reckoned elsewhere in the *Ṛgveda*[71] itself with the rivers like Kubhā, Sindhu and Sarayū.

There are two secondary goddesses invoked by the agricultural community such as *Urvarā* the Ploughland and *Sītā* the Furrow,[72] connected apparently with the fertile earth. In RV VIII.21.3, Indra is called the lord of Arable Land or Field (*urvarāpati*).

The Mahī Mātā Aditi

Under the literal name *mahī mātā*, the Great Mother principle is often found invoked in the *Ṛgveda*. The personification of Infinite Nature is understood in her symbology to reflect two basic elements of the motherhood (*mātā*) and of the divine magnitude or immensity (*mahī*). At one place it is significantly said that the Great Mother, *Mahī Mātā*, comes hitherward from heaven making a proclamation and arousing her Daughter.[73] Another passage makes her mention pragmatically, "It is known that Mahī Mātā as Pṛśni has received the germ of the mighty ones (namely the Maruts) for the (universal) welfare."[74]

Quite often in Vedic literature Aditi is the designate *Magna Mater* or Mahī Mātā. Mahī Mātā Aditi brought forth Mitra and Varuṇa, and is spoken of as the Guardian-of-Rita (*ṛtāvarī*).[75] Similar expression is found in another passage where Aditi appears to be called *Ṛtā*.[76] There is frequent mention of Ṛta in collocation of Aditi and her sons.[77] The infallible and mighty sons of Aditi are said to have grown in the home of Ṛta the Law Eternal.[78]

According to the prevailing view,[79] Aditi symbolises as an abstract deity the principle of Bondlessness or Infinitude. The word *aditi* is often explained in later literature as the negation of *diti*, and derived from root *dā* 'to bind' or 'enclose', prefixed by negative '*a*'. Of her nature in the *Ṛgveda*, explanations given by modern scholars differ widely. Wallis holds that she simply denotes freedom from bondage.[80] By other scholars who base their views on one or the other significant passage of the *Ṛgveda*, she is regarded as underlined in her personification either by the eternal principle of celestial light (RV I.115.5; I.136.3 *jyotishmatī*),[81] or Sinlessness (RV I.162.22; II.27.14),[82] Immortality (RV I.24.1; VIII.101.15),[83] Deathlessness (RV I.24.1), Infinite Consciousness,[84] or Universal Coherence.[85]

No doubt, these viewpoints have certain arguments in favour and as noted above the ideas forming their basis are hinted at in the *Ṛgveda* itself. However, it is not unreasonable to suggest, in view of the above significant statements or epithets for Aditi, that more than one abstract concept on eternity and infallible divine spirit had become associated with the Great Goddess (*Mahī Mātā*) whose origins remain largely shrouded in pre-Vedic religion.

While referring to a concrete basis as to her origin, a close correspondence of her character has been suggested by various scholars with several tangible aspects of nature, namely the earth,[86] the cow,[87] the dawn,[88] or *dyaus*—sky.[89] But, it is clear that Aditi in the Ṛgvedic religion is assertedly differentiated from all these elements and had already grown greater than any of the above phenomena. Her own characteristic individuality is indeed beyond such definitions. She is the Mighty Goddess *par excellence*, mother of all gods, men and creation—thus presiding over the two pervasive principles of Imperishable Infinitude and Motherhood.

According to Max Müller, Aditi is 'not a modern deity' but 'one of the oldest Aryan deities'.[90] Moreover in the hymnology of the *Ṛgveda*, which is polytheistic in character, her glorification was easily arrived at considering her the substratum of inexhaustible (=immortal) birthplace of all divine and physical creations. Thus she was recognised as the Great Mother, Mahī Mātā, Aditi.

J. Przyluski has rightly emphasised that Aditi alone is a crucial case which makes the view of supposed ascendency of the gods over the goddesses in Vedic mythology untenable.[91] Her sovereignty is indeed unlimited and she is supreme over the gods. As noted by him, it is the opinion of the *Jaiminīya-Upanishad-Brāhmaṇa* (I.41), commenting on RV I.89.10, that: She is omnipotent and immense, a power superior to the divine creation.[92] However, Przyluski has introduced in his article a new line of investigation and taken considerable pains to show that the name Aditi corresponds philologically to the name *Anaitia*. In his own words, "Her name can be related to that of Anaitia especially if one admits that the dental *n* imperfectly nasalised, may have been borrowed without nasalization: in an intervocalic position, this sound has been noted by means of the voiced *d* according to the common tendency in Indo-Aryan, and the dipthong *ai* has been reduced to *i*."[93] How far this suggestion holds good it is difficult to ascertain any further.[94]

If we refer to the Sanskrit etymology, the word *aditi* has a suitable derivation as follows: from root *do* 'to divide', 'to destruct' (*avakhaṇḍane*) added with negative prefix *a*. "Whose attribute is not violation or infliction"—Aditi, thus an appropriate name of the benevolent Mother-goddess (*mātā*). The idea is, in fact, abundantly hinted at in the *Ṛgveda*: Śunaḥśepa about to be sacrificed appeals:

"Who shall to mighty Aditi restore us?" (*ko no mahyā aditaye punardāt*, RV I.24.1) He further begs:

"O Ādityas, we made faultless may belong to Aditi." (*athā vayamāditya vrate tavānāgaso adityaye syāma*, RV I.24.15) RV VII.40.4—"Aditi, easy to call, *devī*, unassailed" (*suhavā devyaditiranarvā*). RV VIII.18.7—"Aditi . . . may she with steady increase, protect us from evil" (*aditiḥ patvaṁhasaḥ sadāvṛdhā*). RV X.72.5—"Sons of Aditi are sharers of immortal life."[95]

Though the above passages cannot be said to be fully decisive about Aditi's original character, yet the notion appears to have been understood in essence. Further, when she was represented theriomorphically as a cow, the earlier idea came to be interpreted somewhat otherwise, namely the Cow-Aditi indestructible, or that can (or should) not be slain.[96] Thus she is spoken of as *Aghnyā* ('Not-to-be-slain').[97]

In view of the above etymology and her theriomorphic representation[98] by a cow, it seems that Aditi might have been originally a cow-goddess; and possibly deriving her personification from the cow she was ascribed various aspects of motherhood. In RV I.153.3 she is qualified as *dhenuraditi*, Aditi the Cow.[99] Elsewhere the gods are sons of a celestial cow who is presumably no other than Aditi.[100]

Above all, Aditi has the function of the divine mother. She gave birth to the twins Mitra and Varuṇa whom she conceived as babes in proper season.[101] Aryamā also shares Aditi's sonship and is graphically celebrated to have waxen in the home of Ṛta together with Mitra and Varuṇa.[102] Still, she has Indra as her mighty son.[103] Among her other virtual offsprings are included Bhaga,[104] Aṁśa,[105] Daksha[106] and Sūrya or Mārtāṇḍa as the eighth.[107]

Thus she is called the mother of seven[108] or eight[109] sons. To bring forth each one of them she had to take separate wombs,[110] and thus in all she is attributed with eight *yonis*.[111]

There is a class of gods called *Āditya*, and they are often described as Aditi's sons. In view of Macdonell's theory about the origin of Aditi, it is to be believed that the name Aditi was in fact conjured up from an appellation meaning 'sons of Freedom' (*āditya*) as is evidently the case with Indra's mother Śavasī raised from the phrase 'son of strength'.[112] It is also said that the principal characteristics of the Āditya gods were ascribed to Aditi as their mother. The original gods, who were called 'sons of freedom', or *āditya* appear from the *Ṛgveda* to be Mitra, and Varuṇa, and several others who were given this name after Aditi had been created and accepted as their mother.[113] However, in no case Aditi appears to be a later invention than the name Āditya, which should be the fact if one were to believe Macdonell's opinion. It is quite likely and substantiated from most of the Ṛgvedic citations that Aditi is an entity as ancient as any other of Vedic deities.[114] Again, the name *āditya* does not even appear to be of Indo-Aryan or Indo-European antiquity.

A variety of expressions like *āditeya*,[115] *aditeḥ putra*,[116] *aditeḥ putrāsaḥ*,[117] does also indicate that the epithet *āditya* was derived from Aditi and not *vice versa*. It was in origin an expression implying 'son of Aditi'. The term like *adititve* also confirms that the personification of Aditi was already complete and well established[118] by the Ṛgvedic period. The gods known as 'ṣons of Aditi' were easily grouped together and formed a clan of gods, in number sometimes three (RV II. 27.2), four (RV, Vālakhilya section, 4.7), six (RV II.27.1), seven (RV IX.114.3), or eight (RV X.72.8-9). It is only later that Āditya becomes a regular name of the sun god, and by this consideration the number raised to twelve includes twelve solar gods in the *Brāhmaṇas* and subsequent texts.[119]

Unequivocally, the name Āditya and the group of Āditya gods represent a myth which does not appear to be of Indo-Aryan antiquity.[120] In fact '*āditya*' was a term invented or derived after Aditi as designating her sonship.

Making reference to the natural basis of her origin, Max Müller holds that Aditi was one of the oldest names of the dawn, and accordingly one Ṛgvedic poet speaks of the dawn as the face of Aditi.[121] Besides, there are passages in the *Ṛgveda* itself which appear to confirm Bergaigne's theory that the goddess Aditi is a development from Dyaus-Aditi.[122] Or, in the opinion of Colinet.[123] quoted by Keith,[124] Aditi is a sort of feminine form of Dyaus. As noted earlier, her concrete basis is also to be sometimes connected with the earth,[125] or cow.[126]

She is the mighty goddess-mother and forms the supreme parental pair together with Agni as her male counterpart.[127] There is another specific mention of Indra as Aditi's son who at his birth made his mother widow by killing Vṛtra or Tvashṭā.[128] It appears that in this passage we have a reference, though not explicit, to the myth of the virgin aspect of the Great Mother. As the Ṛgvedic mythology has it, after giving birth to the great hero either she herself should die,[129] or 'the father' her spouse should be slain, so as to be sure about her eternal virgin existence in relation to the future and from the very 'womb' from which the hero came forth, no further generation may take place.[130]

The same idea appears to be at the back of another intriguing expression. For the sake of bearing eight sons, she is said to have 'eight wombs'.[131] Clearly, this concept has a belief in the attribution of a separate *yoni* for each of the eight children of the goddess.

Similar presumably is the intimation of the myth describing reciprocal births of Aditi and Daksha: "From Aditi was born Daksha and from Daksha was Aditi born."[132] As noted by Coomaraswamy, the concept of the virginity of Aditi is also found expressed through such epithets as *anarvā, apravitā, mātā, yuvatī, kanyā, yoshā kumārī*, etc.[133] Further, as it is said, "Aditi is the mother, the father, the son."[134] However, in her cosmic aspect of archetypal generation, she, as the mother-goddess *par excellence*, is to herself represent the categories of such diversifications as the father, (the husband), and the son—or in other words—a male counterpart, in any of these capacities, if thought from the viewpoint of human relationship.

Reflecting her all pervasive and inalienable aspect,[135] she is spoken of to stand for lawfulness and order.[136] Her rule is strong. She never ages. Her influence is far extended[137] and she, the beatific protectress, is the supreme guide.[138] Both existence and non-existence are in her bosom.[139] Indeed, she is called the navel-centre of Immortality.[140] There is a reference to her far-extending sway[141] as the presiding deity of Unboundedness or Infinitude. No sins are hidden from her; thus there is expressed a longing to be sinless in the sight of Aditi.[142] She possesses all celestial features and an attributive resplendence, and upholds the earth.[143] Elsewhere, she or her sons are spoken of as granting light (*jyoti*) to the people.[144]

There is an important aspect of Aditi mentioned in respect of her propitiation as a deity of 'house-and-home' (*pastyā-aditi*).[145] She is even supposed to guard the herd of animals by day and night, and to save from grief her invoker.[146] Betbeen her and the devotee who lauds her with a prayer there is believed to exist a sure tie as between a mother and her son.[147] Her fostering care none can check.[148] She may even grant the grace of Rudra to men: kine, cattle and progeny of the sage.[149] Thus in clear-cut words it is mentioned that she was invoked thrice a day, at morning, noon and at evening.[150]

In her universal definition, she is pantheistically spoken of as to identify in herself diverse aspects of manifestation. On the level of creation, she herself is transformed as Dyaus and Antariksha (and the Earth); as the mother, father and son; as the all-gods; as the five tribes. She is identified with what has been and whatever shall be.[151]

Ushas the Dawn

Blended with elaborate poetic imaginations, Ushas, the personified goddess of Dawn, is, no doubt, a prominent entity among the goddesses of the *Ṛgveda*. Her physical rudiment, always understood distinctly, never allowed her personification grow beyond its phenomenal context. On one hand, she represents all beauties and attractions of the Vedic maidenhood with her aspects of a beloved,[152] wife[153] and mother,[154] also of a daughter[155] and sister.[156] On the other, her radiant figure embodies a number of protean imageries and adumberations connected radically with the morning light and its emphyrean nature.

Ushas is spoken of as the Daughter of Heaven[157] and there is a myth, alluded to several times in the *Ṛgveda* itself[158] of an encounter of Ushas with Indra and the defeat of Ushas, the Heaven's Daughter (*divaḥ duhitaram*), the destruction of her car and her escape far away from the site of the battle (on the Vipāśā).[159]

With her sister Night, she forms a dual of goddesses. Both the goddesses are said to suckle the same infant.[160] Alternatively they travel through the same unending path and are, though of different aspects, one-minded.[161] They are called the young mothers of the eternal law Ṛta.[162] One single hymn, however, celebrates the goddess Rātrī, who according to Macdonell, personifies the bright Night.[163]

However, in several passages, Ushas is a favouring goddess who bestows wealth and progeny upon her worshipper. Only a glimpse of her fertility character can be made out. It is apparent from several significant statements that she was believed to be a goddess of immemorial antiquity (*purāṇī, purandhi*).[164] In one passage a poet expresses this belief in a different way and describes the Dawn as the face of Aditi.[165] In the same verse, the Dawn is celebrated as the mother of gods.[166] Elsewhere, she is spoken of as the arch-mother with whom the seven primeval sages united and desired to beget male children.[167] She is indeed besought to gift progeny and riches to her worshipper.[168] But this facet of her deified entity seems to have already faded away. In the post-Ṛgvedic worship, she, along with several others, relegated to insignificance in the pantheon and we hardly hear of the Dawn as a prominent goddess in the subsequent period.

Other Mothers of Gods

Besides (Heaven-) Earth and Aditi the motherhood of gods or some god is specifically given to Pṛśni, Śavasī, Ambā, Āpaḥ and the Cow-goddess.

Pṛśni

Mother of the Maruts is Pṛśni,[169] a name which is apparently derived from the personification of the mottled storm-cloud,[170] or better the 'variegated' lightning in it. The Maruts are said to be the product of the laughing lightning,[171] who appears to be figuratively named as Pṛśni and was represented in the sacrifice by a speckled cow. In RV 52.16, she is the mother-cow of the Marut hosts. As regards her association with Rudra through the sonship of the Maruts, it is far from doubt that in origin Rudra and Pṛśni respectively represent male and female personifications of the storm-cloud and its lightning in the sky.[172] In RV I.37.7-8 itself, Pṛśni, the mother of the Maruts, is alluded to identify lightning.

Often she is mentioned as a cow,[173] whose milk was shed only once to the Maruts whose germ, she, the great goddess Pṛśni had borne for the advantage of men.[174]

According to Sāyaṇa,[175] Pṛśni is the earth. However, this equation may appear justified in RV IV.5.7.

Śavasī

Indra's mother is named as Śavasī;[176] she is otherwise styled a cow with Indra as her calf. Her other name is Nishṭigrī, who has been identified by Sāyaṇa with Aditi.[177] Macdonell holds a view tha Śtavasī was evolved as a name of Indra's mother in the *Ṛgveda* itself from his epithet 'Son of Might' (*śavasaḥ sūnuḥ*).[178]

Ambā

Ambā or Ambikā is a name for mother. Though no direct attribution of this epithet is alluded to in the *Ṛgveda* to the mother-goddess or an independent mother-deity of that name, it certainly appears to have a significant connection with the Āpaḥ,[179] Sarasvatī[180] and Indrāṇī.[181] Sarasvatī is spoken of as *ambā*[182] and moreover *ambitamā*[183] 'the best of mothers'. The Herbs are also addressed by the name *ambā*.[184] It hardly concludes that the word had any special significance in the *Ṛgveda* except in the phrase *Tryambaka* used once for Rudra.[185] In other Samhitas, Rudra and Ambikā occur as two important deities to whom conjointly offerings are made (for example, the Tryambaka Homa in VS XXX.8) and Ambikā is invoked as the great mother-goddess. She appears to be the archetypal great mother personification under the generical name 'Mother', *ambā* or *ambikā*.

Philologically, the words *ambā*, *ambikā* and possibly *umā* are to be connected with Old Tamil *amma*, *ammā* for mother, and an affinity of these names with Sumerian goddess name *Ama*, *Ummu* possibly signified interesting parallels of a high antiquity.[186]

Tryambaka is taken to mean 'having three mothers' for which in the *Ṛgveda* we have another similar expression *Trimātā*[187] for Agni. The exact implication of *ambaka* cannot be made out as certain, though it is likely that the interchangeable symbolism of the procreative organ of a feminine and the "eye"[188] contributed to a great extent in bringing about accretion of its meaning. The expression 'mother' for certain goddesses in the *Ṛgveda* is no doubt significant, besides single names like Aditi, Pṛthivī etc., we have an independent class of 'Three Mothers' including Iḷā, Bhāratī and Mahī.[189]

The Āpaḥ or Waters

"The Āpaḥ goddesses are our mothers (*ambayaḥ*)."[190] "The Waters are the eternal mothers."[191] Though the physical aspect of water or waters is never lost sight of in the *Ṛgveda*,[192] they are repeatedly spoken of as the 'mothers', mostly in plural (*āpaḥ asmān mātaraḥ*).[193]

Their position as potentate mothers appears to be very high in the Ṛgvedic cosmogony and exceptional glory is attached to their generative function. The Āpaḥ goddesses enjoy a separate personification, though sometimes it is likely to be confused with the personified river deities. As personifying the element of water, they are always plural in number when recognised as indwelling or presiding females or spirits of the primeval water.[194] As Macdonell observes, "The personification is only incipient, hardly extending beyond the notion of their being mothers, young wives, and goddesses who follow the path of gods."[195] However, the identity of the Waters with the universal mother-principle has some extra significance in the *Ṛgveda*. Agni is spoken of as born of the Waters.[196] It is said that the birthplace of Vāk existed in the Waters.[197] Besides, there are certain deities in the *Ṛgveda* whose names apparently denote their character as offspring of the Waters, namely Apāṁ Napāt, Tṛta Āptya.[198] As a cosmogonical truth, there is an explicit statement that it were the Mighty Waters (*Bṛhatīḥ Āpaḥ*) who contained the universe, and conceived and produced Agni.[199] Exemplifying the same idea RV X.82.5-6 has it in question-and-answer as follows:

> "That which is earlier than this earth and heaven and had its being before the demons and gods.
> "What was the primeval germ received by the Waters wherein the gods were seen together?
> "The Waters received that primeval germ wherein the gods were gathered together.
> "It rested upon the navel of Aja wherein existed all created universes."

This passage appears to represent one distinct viewpoint of Ṛgvedic ontologists who regarded Water as the primal cause of creation.[200] RV X.9.1-9 invokes the personified Waters, the Āpaḥ goddesses, without blending their aspect with the deified rivers as we find in most of the verses lauding them.[201]

The class of Apsaras beings, literally those who move on the water,[202] appear to have derived their aspect from the belief in water-goddesses described in RV X.10.4 as the aqueous nymphs flowing in water.[203] They often make company with the Gandharva divinities.[204] Though nothing can be shown as certain from the evidence at hand, the popular belief in the nymphean appearances may have originally suggested the fertility aspect of water and accordingly we find the Apsarases almost always connected with the sexual symbolism in later literature.

The Great Cow

The cow stands only next to the earth in forming exemplary symbol of the motherhood. In the *Ṛgveda*, apart from the analogies based on her conspicuous capacities of birth-giving and milk-bestowing, she is unequivocally lauded as the mother *par excellence*. There the cow who yields milk often signifies motherhood, and as such the great goddesses like Aditi,[205] Earth,[206] Pṛśni,[207] Vāk,[208] Ushā[209] and Iḷā[210] are identified with and represented by her, particularly in the *yajña* rituals where a cow occurs as part of its essential details.

There is a mystic statement which alludes to the Cosmic Cow and her station where the great eternal being was born.[211] Further in the same hymn she is named as Iḷā whose milk is Order.[212] The cow in her universal aspect appears to be mentioned in full glory in RV I.164.17 and I.164.27-29. Her functions and attributes are of cosmic implications. She manifests herself together with her calf; she is inviolable (*aghnyā*); the guardian-mother of the Vasus; has created the mortals by her mind's power, and becoming radiant reveals her nature. Further, she is celebrated as the Great Cow with exhaustless udders, pouring a thousand streams of milk to feed her votaries.[213] Elsewhere, she appears lauded as Milch-cow of the ancients yielding things longed for.[214]

Three Great Goddesses (Tisro Devīḥ)

In the Āprī hymns,[215] a group of three great goddesses is invariably mentioned. They occur conjointly and form a celebrated triad, invoked to take their seat in the sacrifice. Sarasvatī, Bhāratī and Iḷā are the most frequent names besought to bestow their favour on the worship. They bring delight[216] and weal to the votaries.[217] Their human form is alluded[218] to and sometimes each of them is regarded to represent a distinctive department.[219]

As a statement made in the *Ṛgveda* itself suggests, Bhāratī presides over the Bharatis (or her class), Iḷā over gods and men, and Sarasvatī over the Sarasvatīs (or rivers).[220] What possibly this signifies is not clear except in the case of Sarasvatī whose aspect as the leading river-goddess is well understood. Elsewhere, the great godhead Agni is addressed as appearing to the worshipper in different forms according to the mode of homage; Aditi for gifts, Bhāratī for lauding praises; Iḷā for strength and Sarasvatī possibly for wealth (?).[221]

Sarasvatī the River and Speech

Sarasvatī is the celebrated and prominent mother-deity in the *Ṛgveda*. Her deification from a river of that name is well understood and defined in the hymns.[222] Assertedly, she is regarded supreme among the mothers, supreme among the rivers and supreme among the goddesses.[223] Her aspect as identifying Wisdom or Eloquence is also alluded to in several passages, though not in an explicitly understood manner, and seems not yet defined beyond its rudiment. Neither of her three aspects, that of a river, a mother-goddess, and a goddess of wisdom, appears detached from the other and usually all of them are at once present in the mind of Ṛgvedic poets.

Invoked in three full hymns[224] and numerous other passages she, no doubt, is regarded as most celebrated among the rivers; described 'in grandiloquent terms as a rushing, powerful flood, that surpasses all other waters in greatness, with her mighty waves tearing away the heights of the mountains as she moves roaring along'.[225] Thus being prominent among all the rivers, she is 'the mother of streams'.[226]

She is the best among the goddesses and, as already quoted, forms the Goddess Triad with Iḷā and Bhāratī.[227] She is invoked in significant words as follows:

> "Sarasvatī, the mighty flood, illuminates with her splendour and brightens all pious thoughts." (RV I.3.12)
>
> "She incites all pleasant songs, inspires all gracious thought; may she accept our rite." (RV I.3.11)

In these passages her aspect presiding over the faculties of human mind and speech appears in the process of formulation, and that was achieved only at a later stage of mythology when she was blended with the goddess Vāk or Speech of identical nature.[228]

Her one distinct aspect, treated so explicitly in the *Ṛgveda*, reveals her significant character of a fertility goddess. It knows her as the stay of all human generation, and granting fame and progeny to her votaries.[229] Thus she is sometimes a goddess of childbirth in particular.

Iḷā and Bhāratī

Iḷā is a mother of cattle herds in RV V.41.19; but according to Sāyaṇa on RV VII.16.8, she is personified oblation in the sacrifice. Likewise Bergaigne is of opinion that "The sense of 'offering' is indicated again for *iḷā* in VII.3.7, where it is construed (in the plural) in a manner parallel to the word *havya*, and especially by the epithet *ilāvantaḥ*, applied to the press-stones, X.94.10. The last citation suggests especially the idea of a liquid offering. This is also the case in those passages where this word is construed as an object to the root *mad* 'to be intoxicated', III.53.1; 59.3; VI.10.7."[230]

As it has been observed by Macdonell, "Iḷā, Nourishment, is the personification (mentioned less than a dozen times in the RV) of the offering of milk and butter, thus representing plenty derived from the cow. Hence Iḷā is in the Brāhmaṇas frequently connected with, though never an actual name of, the cow; and in the

Naighanṭuka (2.11) it occurs as one of the synonyms of cow. Owing to the nature of the offering Iḷā is called butter-handed (RV VII.16.8) and butter-footed (RV X.70.8)."[231]

RV V.41.19*a* speaking of Iḷā as the mother of cattle must be, however, taken as construed with its preceding stanza as also clearly is the case with V.41.19*b* with st. 20. It is the Vasus here who are invoked to allow the sacrificer to have favour of the strengthening nourishment through the Cow's praise. There is indeed no doubt that this very Cow is further enumerated in the next lines: "May she who gives good gifts, the gracious Goddess (*sudānuḥ, mṛḷayantī, devī*), come speeding nigh to us for our well-being. May Iḷā, Mother of the herds of cattle, approve us . . ."[232]

Apparently Iḷā the goddess is extolled here as personifying the Divine Cow, mother of all animal kingdom (*yūthasya mātā*) and granting (*sudānu*) bounteous gifts of nourishing food. While in another passage she stands for the gifts of a cow (III.1.23),[233] and has interesting epithets such as *prajāvatī* and *dhenumatī* in RV VIII.31.4. Elsewhere, in a rather enigmatical hymn, Iḷā as the Great Cow is said (V.55.13) to have sprinkled with the milk of *ṛta* (i.e. world-order). Her close link with the abundance derived from kine is often indicated.[234] In RV X.36.5, Iḷā is the presiding genius and personification of flowing libations (apparently of molten butter) in the sacrifice.[235]

In RV III.29.3, Agni appears to be spoken of as the Son of Iḷā; he is asked to be placed with care on that who lies recumbent, *uttānā*, which is usually an epithet of the Earth-goddess,[236] who when made prolific straight gave birth to the Steer, i.e. Agni, who the Iḷā's Son is born with red pillar, radiant in his splendour. This Agni is further enumerated (RV III.29.4) to have been set up on the Iḷā's place and on the navel of the Earth. Here it is, however, tempting to recognise Iḷā as a personification of the sacrificial altar itself,[237] besides her well-known identity as the sacrificial offering, although an intended meaning for the altar can be well understood in the expression "Iḷā's place" (*ilāyāḥ pada*).[238] Through her rudimentary personification derived from the sacrificial oblations, Iḷā seems to have come to be regarded as the presiding deity of the sacrificial worship in general.[239] As such she is said to have been made by the gods an instructress of mankind (*mānushasya śāsanī*, I.31.11), and she is possessed of heroes (*suvīrām*), is dauntless (*anehasām*) and quick destroyer (of enemies, I.40.4). There is, however, alluded to in RV III.29.3 an assimilation of this goddess with the Earth; in fact, RV III.23.4 construes the word *pṛthivī* as an epithet of Iḷā.[240]

In the Ṛgvedic collection there are ten Āprī hymns, three contained in the first book, two in the tenth and one each in other *maṇḍalas* excepting the fourth and the sixth. Verse 9 or 8 of all these hymns is regularly dedicated to the invokation of Tisro Devīḥ, the Three Goddesses, while in other verses the Divine Doors personified as females (*dvāro devīḥ*) and the dual goddesses Dawn and Night (*ushāsānaktā*) are invoked besides the god Agni under several names, Tvashṭā and others.[241]

There is no doubt that the sacrifice involved in the Āprī hymns centres round Agni and besides this god, it is the goddess Iḷā who invariably figures as specifically mentioned by name and invoked, along with her sister-goddesses Sarasvatī and Bhāratī (or Mahī) whether named (as is usually the case) or just referred to collectively as Tisro Devīḥ (as in RV X.70.8). According to Prof. K.R. Potdar all the three goddesses owed their origin to the socio-religious circumstances in which the

Āprī hymns were composed: "The tribe of Bharata was clearly the most popular one while the sacrificial ritual was growing. This growth was apparently taking place on the banks of the great Ṛgvedic river Sarasvatī and its tributaries. Bharata were the first to attain such predominance and hence their family deity or deities naturally came to be associated with the sacrificial ritual. The first offering to the gods was also poetically sought to be glorified like the first Hotṛ priest and it found expression in the conception of 'iḷā', thus enabling the poet to form a trinity of divinities, all having poetic association with the sacrifice."[242]

Female Counterparts of the Great Gods

The tendency to assign a female energy as his spouse to a male god has no doubt its early beginning in the *Ṛgveda*. A few of the dominant male deities are found represented by their female energies or "wives", who are given specific names usually derived by adding feminine suffix to the name of the respective god. These rather grammatical entities do not appear to play at this stage any significant role in the Vedic pantheon. Their mention is only occasional and what we find are nothing more than mere names of colourless assumption. RV I.22.11-12 invokes Indrāṇī, Varuṇānī and Agnāyī who are addressed as 'Spouses of Heroes'. They are associated with each other and 'have full wings'. This latter statement is of considerable value and possibly points to their particular iconographic trait which we find only later connected with a Mother-goddess. Another list gives six names of the gracious consorts of the gods, viz., Rāṭ, Aśvinī, Agnāyī, Indrāṇī, Rodasī and Varuṇānī.[243]

The figure of Indrāṇī is somewhat distinct and through a mythical legend of the quarrel over Vṛshākapi she forms subject of a long hymn.[244] One short hymn was perhaps dedicated to her under the name *Śachī*.[245] But the word *śachī* itself does not occur in the verses. It was possibly a personification derived later from the notion of great 'prowess' or 'exploit' of Indra, who is often called Sakra and '*Lord of śachī or might*' in the *Ṛgveda*.[246]

The later concept of *śakti*, i.e. god's energy or personate Nature, though never explicitly grasped in the *gveda*, appears in its rudiments in a few passages. It is particularly with Indra that his *śakti* (or energy) is mentioned.[247] In RV I.83.3, Indra's *śakti* is said to bestow auspicious blessings on the sacrificer. Elsewhere,[248] Strength the goddess appears as an important phenomenon helping Indra just as the Dawn supports the Sun.[249] Only by the time of the Brāhmaṇa texts the idea gets metaphysical formulations and fuller basis.

Tutelary Goddesses

There are a few other significant names of goddesses who appear to have assumed their personification as female divinities just metaphorically. They find only occasional mention in the *Ṛgveda* and their individual definitions are largely based on abstract ideas or objects of human utility, besought to favour with welfare and prosperity. Such are the names of *Deshṭrī* ("Instructress"),[250] *Dhishaṇā* ("Wish" or "Abundance"),[251] *Varūtrī*,[252] *Apvā*,[253] *Sītā* ("Furrow"),[254] *Diti* ("Gift"),[255] *Nirṛti* ("Decay"),[256] etc.

Apvā seems to be a tutelary goddess who presided over sin or some sickness.[257] Ūrmyā, "Undulating", is the name of the Night goddess.[258] Diti may be a name evolved from that of Aditi. Twice she appears along with Aditi,[259] and once with other gods as a goddess granting what is desirable.[260] It is only in later Saṁhitās that her aspect becomes somewhat clear in direct opposition of Aditi, and the sons of Diti are mentioned along with those of Aditi.[261] Important is the passage where Agni is prayed to grant *diti* and preserve from *aditi*.[262] Macdonell is of opinion that it is more likely that in this verse Dity and Aditi are quite different words, derived from *dā* 'to give', and thus meaning 'giving' and 'non-giving'.[263] In RV V. 62.8 the gods Mitra and Varuṇa are said to see from their chariot Aditi and Diti at morning and evening. But elsewhere Diti is mentioned independent of Aditi and grants (*dāti*) what is desirable (*vāryam*).[264] This last passage may show that in the *Ṛgveda* Diti was regarded more than a mere antithesis of Aditi; in origin she possibly personified 'giving' or 'gift' from root *dā* 'to give'.[265]

Varūtrī 'Protectress' is an attributive name of some goddess[266] and sometimes also that of a class of guardian goddesses.[267]

Deshṭrī 'Instructress' is another obscure name for a female deity invoked in the marriage hymn.[268]

Sītā the personified Furrow or cultivated earth is a fertility goddess in RV IV.57.6-7. To her was offered worship with milk and oblation so that she would bless and bestow abundant prosperity.[269] Similarly, fertile earth is addressed by the name *Urvara*.[270]

In one place *Dakshiṇā*, 'Guerdon', is addressed as a goddess, coeval with Brahmanaspati, Indra and Soma.[271] The abstract goddess *Nirṛti*, 'Decay' or 'Decease', appears as opposed to life,[272] and possibly she also formed class with low-graded gnomes and ogresses.[273] Other interesting goddess names personifying abstract notions include *Śraddhā* 'Faith',[274] *Sūnṛtā* 'Bounty',[275] *Puraṁdhi* 'Plenty',[276] *Anumati* 'Favour',[277] *Aramati* 'Devotion',[278] and *Asunāti* 'Spirit-life'.[279]

Such goddess names appear of little significance as they were to an extent mere appellative of the object or concept they personified or just represented. In most of the cases the personalisation has hardly developed beyond the rudiment and as a matter of fact their female character was only accidental or 'grammatical'.

A few of them may be exceptions. There is Dhishaṇā the personified vessel of plenty. As discussed by Ludwig[280] and Johannson,[281] the word denotes a vessel or bowl and at the same time a Goddess of Abundance and Prosperity presiding over it. Literally it also meant 'wish' and thereby the Wish-Goddess as is clear in RV III.31.3.[282] In RV X.35.7, Dhishaṇā is spoken of as the mother of opulence (*rāyo janitrī*). Her name occurs along with those of Hotrā, Bhāratī and Varūtrī, etc.[283] She is closely associated with Soma as the bowl or container of it which she personifies as well as presides over;[284] her wish-fulfilling aspect may have its origin in the notion of allowing bounteous potion of the drink to gods and men.[285] Dhishaṇā the goddess (*devī*) is stated to have set drink for the Ṛbhus,[286] for Indra and Agni.[287] She is said to have made keen the strength, intelligence and thunderbolt of Indra, and also his Indrahood.[288] She is said to accord riches to the seer,[289] or appoint a god (possibly Indra) for the riches of the votary.[290] Indra is elsewhere spoken of to allot potions of strength and riches like Dhishaṇā herself.[291]

Another important name is of Araṇyānī the guardian divinity of forests and wilderness. In a full hymn of the tenth book,[292] she has been celebrated with a distinct phraseology of vivifying character. She, the Lady of the Forest, is glorified as the mother of beasts and all sylvan growth; as sweet-scented and redolent of balm; abounding in food without tillage; her physical presence being felt in the jungle solitude by the various eeric sounds and vanishing appearances, described in a graphic way in the hymn.[293] In fact, her personification is not much emphatic, for in verse 4 the *araṇyānī* simply denotes forest.[294] But the most impressive and weird picture of the wild life given in this hymn is of its own kind in Vedic literature and amply testifies to the kindred belief in tutelary deities and spirits of the forest being significantly felt in the Ṛgvedic religion.

The Triune of Lunar Goddesses

A particular class of goddesses known in the *Ṛgveda* is that of *Sinīvālī, Rākā* and *Guṅgū*.[295] According to later Vedic texts these names represent different phases of the moon,[296] and each of them personified the spirit connected with that particular lunar position.[297] Thus, Rākā presided over the actual day of full moon and Sinīvālī the day before new moon.[298] Guṅgū, of whom we have only this single mention,[299] was possibly identical to Kuhū, a name for the personified new moon day but not occurring in the *Ṛgveda*.[300] In later tradition, instead of the name Guṅgū, Kuhū is always counted in the above triad of moon-goddesses.[301]

The belief that the moon acted as the cause of conception in women is found widely prevailing in most of the ancient and primitive societies.[302] Generally the moon was primitively thought as male,[303] and according to the Vedic notion also the Moon is said to be the real husband of all women.[304] The lunar deity or deities are in fact almost universally known to preside over fertility, sex life, conception and childbirth.[305]

RV II.32.4-7 extolls Rākā and Sinīvālī as follows:[306]

> "With eulogy I call on Rākā swift to hear: may she, auspicious, hear us, and herself observe.
> With never-breaking needle may she sew her work, and give a hero son most wealthy, meet for praise. (4)
> "All thy kind thoughts, O Rākā, lovely in their form, wherewith thou grantest wealth to him who offers gifts—
> With these come thou to us this day benevolent,
> O blessed One, bestowing food of thousand sorts. (5)
> "O broad-hipped Sinīvālī, thou who art the Sister of the Gods,
> Accept the offered sacrifice, and, Goddess, grant us progeny. (6)
> "With lovely fingers, lovely arms, prolific Mother of many sons—
> Present the sacred gifts to her, to Sinīvālī Queen of men." (7)

Here Rākā (a name possibly derived from root *rā* 'to give')[307] is described as an auspicious goddess (*subhagā*), rich and bountiful, and granting son, opulence and nourishment. Her lunar character appears to be hinted in the expression referring to her work with never-breaking needle.[308] Her name appears again in RV V.42.12

along with Sarasvatī and Bṛhaddivā; but according to Sāyaṇa[309] *bṛhaddivā* is here an epithet of Rākā, thus denoting 'very brilliant' form of the goddess who presides over the day of full moon.

Personification and fertility character of Sinīvālī is more apparent, In RV X. 184.2 she is invoked, along with Sarasvatī, to set the embryo.[310] She is described as the sister of the gods (*devānāṁ svasā*) and as the mistress of the family (*viśpatnī*).[311] She is responsible for the birth of many (*bahusūvarī*) and thus is begged to grant progeny.[312] Particularly noteworthy is the description of her physical aspect, mentioning her broad hips, fair arms and fair fingers. This may give us a clue to the early iconography of fertility and folk goddesses.[313]

However, the word *sinīvālī* seems to be etymologically obscure. Its first part '*sini*' may remotely be connected with the name of the Semetic moon-god Sin or Sinn.[314]

Collective Mothers or Sisters

At several places, the *Ṛgveda* makes mention of plural goddesses or maids. They are often counted as three, seven or ten, and are collectively called Mothers, Sisters or Virgins. Among themselves they have been given no independent identity in such groups and are allotted no separate function or name. Particularly these goddess hosts are associated with Agni as his sisters or mothers, who are mostly seven in number.

Agni is said to be the child of three mothers (*trimātā*),[315] who may be identical with the three holy Ladies of Waters mentioned in the second part of the same stanza.[316] But this group of three Goddesses appears to have indirect reference to the goddess triad of Iḷā, Sarasvatī and Bhāratī.[317] Besides, Agni is said to have two mothers,[318] who are often interpreted to represent the two sticks or *araṇīs* employed in producing fire by attrition.[319] Similarly the Ten Mothers[320] or Ten Sisters[321] of Agni are understood to refer to the ten fingers of the hands which take part in kindling fire from the friction of the two sticks.[322] In RV I.95.2 they are known as the Ten Young daughters of Tvashṭā. RV III.29.13 makes it further explicit: 'The Ten Sisters, unwedded and united, together hold the Babe, the new-born Infant.'[323] A similar host of Ten Dames or Sisters signifying the ten fingers of both hands is mentioned in the ritual preparation of the Soma juice.[324] However, the above groups of Two, Three and Ten Women do not appear to have grown beyond their rudiment.

The most favourite number of the host goddesses is seven, and it may not be irrelevant to admit an affinity of such Seven Sisters or Mothers with the popular motifs of the seven Māīs and Seven Sister maidens in Indian folklore.[325] In fact, the terms 'sister' and 'mother' do not reveal any specific relationship. When the folk goddesses are called 'sisters', we think they are believed to be sisters among themselves. Similarly as 'mothers' they refer to their own mother aspect. When known as 'maidens', they are believed to be a group of the virgins or kindred mother goddesses of virgin nature.

The Seven red Sisters associated with Agni are once mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*.[326] They are interpreted by Sāyaṇa as the seven tongues or flames of Agni which are given separate names in thel ater texts.[327] Elsewhere, they are the Seven Auspicious Mothers[328] of Agni. Sometimes the Seven Sisters or Mothers are understood to signify the rivers or sacred streams.[329]

RV I.164.3 mentions the Seven Sisters who bear the names of cows and are together singing the praises. The Seven Maiden Sisters are effectively invoked in a charm against poison or snake-bite:[330]

> So have the peahens three-times-seven,
> so have the Maiden Sisters Seven
> Carried thy venom: far away, as
> girls bear water in their jars.

It reads like a regular folk song and the Seven Maiden Sisters evidently belonged to the contemporary folklore.

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2. See Robert Briffault, *The Mothers* (London, 1927), ch. 23; J. Przyluski, op. cit., p. 405; Starbuck, *ERE*, Vol. V, p. 828; R.P. Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races* (Rajshahi, 1916), p. 153; etc.
3. "A note on the Aśvamedha", *Archiv Orientalani*, Vol. 7, 1936, p. 310.
4. The religion transmitted to us in the hymns of the *Ṛgveda* does not at all seem to be a complete record of the period (Keith, A.B., *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, p. 13). Moreover, a view seems plausible, though with some reserve, that 'it contains the poetry used by the priests in the sacrifice to high gods, but not, with rare exceptions, the lower religion or magical beliefs' (ibid., p. 13) of the populace. Even the sacerdotal is not complete. The earliest portions of the Saṁhitā, however, have to reveal clearly an occupation or absorption of the Rshi's mind by the official hieratic views. The lack of any clear picture from the *Ṛgveda* of popular cults and their magico-religious practices and thoughts may also well account for the *known* unpopularity of the goddesses or mother-goddesses in the period.
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7. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 2; H.D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Ṛgveda* (Bombay, 1923), p. 81.
8. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 21.
9. Hopkins, E.W., *Rel. Ind.*, p. 58; J.G. Frazer, *The Worship of Nature* (London, 1926), p. 22.
10. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 21.
11. Ibid., p. 21; Keith, op. cit., p. 95.
12. RV, I.191.6; VI.51.5; see J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. V (London, 1884), pp. 22-29.
13. RV, I.185.5; X.93.1.
14. RV, I.159.3.
15. Also RV, I.106.3.
16. *Vedic Mythology*, p. 22.

17. RV, I.160.4.
18. Griswold, op. cit., p. 101.
19. RV, I.160.2.
20. RV, X.54.3; VIII.36.4.
21. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 56; RV, VIII.50.2.
22. RV, X.54.3.
23. *The Cult of the Mother Goddess* (London, 1859), pp. 112-113.
24. For example, RV, V.59.8; X.59.7; X.133.5; X.111.5.
25. RV, V.59.8; X.63.2.
26. A. Bergaigne, *La Religion Vedique*, Vol. III, p. 90 (English trans., Vol. III, p. 93).
27. Ibid.
28. As he puts it, "That Aditi is the equivalent of the divine pair formed by heaven and the earth appears to be proved besides by a passage which has repeated twice the expression: "O heaven and earth, Aditi, protect us", IV.55.1; VII.62.4, by the use of dual number for the verb and by the construction of the vocative adite without accent after another vocative, rendering it impossible to distinguish Aditi here from heaven and the earth."
29. The use of diacritical marks is, however, made inadvertently in the printed book of Prof. Griswold. We quote the relevant passage as it is in the original.
30. RV, III.6.9. Also see RV, I.61.8; and RV, VIII.28.2 referring to Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman and Agni with their consorts.
31. RV, V.46.8 mentions *Aśvinī* (of the Aśvins), Agnāyī (of Agni), Indrāṇī (of Indra), Rodasī (of Rudra), and Varuṇānī (of Varuṇa), and others (not named).
32. RV, I.101.7; I.167.5-7; V.56.8-9; V.61.4-9.
33. The meaning of Rodasī as 'Dyāvāpṛthivī' should also not be overlooked in this context as it becomes regular in the Brāhmaṇa texts (see TBr. 22.9.4; ŚBr. 6.4.4.2; 6.7.3.2; 7.3.1.30; Ait. Br. 2.41).
34. RV, VIII.101.15; I.153.3; X.27.14; X.133.7.
35. J.G. Frazer, *The Worship of Nature*.
36. See A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, Breslau, 1891-1902), III, p. 405; A.B. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, Cambridge, Mass., 1925, I, p. 211.
37. RV, III.55.14, with Sāyaṇa's commentary on it.
38. Also RV, I.23.20; X.17.10; etc.
39. RV, IV.7.6.
40. A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, Strassburg, 1897, p. 85.
41. RV, X.121.7.
42. Keith, op. cit., p. 141.
43. RV, VI.50.7; as the genetrixes of the gods, RV, X.63.2; I.139.11.
44. RV, V.41.15; V.53.9; also I.112.12.
45. RV, VII.36.6.
46. RV, X.146.6.
47. RV, VII.77.2.
48. RV, X.97.1 ff.
49. See Macdonell, op. cit., pp. 15 ff; Keith, op. cit., pp. 86 ff.
50. Madhusudana Ojha, *Ādhidaivikādhyāya*, Jaipur, 1950, p. 9.
51. Ibid.: *yā etāstisro devyobhāratīḍā-sarasvatyo nāmākhyātāḥ saishā vāgevaikā drashṭavyā.*
52. Ibid.: *vāgeveḍābhūsthānā sarasvatyantarikshasthānā bhāratīdyusthāneti sthānabhedāt tisrasaṁjñā bhajate.*
53. These three, three and two respectively in each sphere are celebrated in Rgvedic hymns in full (*sūkta-bhāk*).
54. These seven, one and two respectively are celebrated in Rgvedic verses only (*rg-bhāk*).
55. These one, eighteen and two respectively find only accidental mention in the *Ṛgveda* (*nipāta-bhāk*).
56. RV, X.18.10.
57. Th. Bloch, "Excavations at Lauriya", *ASIAR*, 1906-07; A.K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (New York, 1927), p. 10; V.S. Agrawala, *Studies in Indian Art* (Varanasi, 1965), p. 243.
58. RV, X.59.7.
59. Compare with the description of Sinīvālī in VS, 11.56.
60. RV, X.114.2-3; here are mentioned three Nirṛtis; a tendency is apparent of making reference in plural to hostile or negative personifications and making a class of them.
61. RV, I.164.33. It is a usual expression in the *Ṛgveda* to address them as two great bowls—*dhishane* (I.160.1; VI.70.3).
62. RV, III.29.3, *Uttānāyam*; RV, X.27.13, *nyaṅkuttānām*.
63. RV, X.72.3-4.
64. RV, IX.91.1; IX.93.1; III.29.13.
65. RV, III.29.3.
66. For a name like *uttānapadā* for the Earth Goddess is nowhere found in Vedic literature.

67. RV, V.43.15: *mā no mātā pṛthivī durmatau dhāt*.
68. RV, VIII.34.21; VII.42.3; X.64.15.
69. RV, V.43.6; VII.36.8; X.92.5. The epithet *mahī* suggests the identity of the Earth who frequently bears it. Sāyaṇa on RV, VII. 36.8, VII.42.3 confirms that *Aramati-Mahī* is 'Never-resting Earth'. See A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* (Breslau, 1891-1902), III, p. 405; Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, I, p. 211.
70. M. Mole, *Culte, Mythe et Cosmologie dans l'Iran Ancien* (France Uni. Press, 1963), pp. 170 f.
71. RV, V.53.9; also see I.112.12.
72. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 138.
73. *prayunjati divi eti bruvana mahi mata duhitur bodhayani*, RV, V.47.1.
74. *vide hi mātā maho mahī shā set pṛshnih subhve garbhamādhāt*, RV, VI.66.3.
75. *tā mātā viśvavedasā'suryāya pramahasā mahī jajānāditir ṛtāvarī*, RV, VIII.25.3.
76. Though the word is taken by all commentators of the *Ṛgveda* as standing as an expression in dual for Mitra and Varuṇa, we wish to hazard that it is no less likely that it is an epithet qualifying Aditi.
77. RV, I.152.3; I.153.3; VIII.25.1, 3, 7-8; V.65.2; V.67.4; VII.66.13.
78. RV, VII.60.5.
79. Held by Max Muller, Muir and Roth.
80. Wallis, *Cosmology of the Ṛgveda* (London, 1887), pp. 45 ff.
81. Hillebrandt, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 408 ff.
82. Benfey's view, quoted by Griffith, *Ṛgveda Trans.*, Vol. I, p. 59.
83. Max Müller, *Origin and Growth of Religion* (reprint, Varanasi, 1964), pp. 232-3.
84. View of Śrī Aurobindo, discussed also by M.P. Pandit, *Aditi and other Deities in the Veda* (Madras, 1958), pp. 5 ff.
85. V.S. Agrawala, his view based on RV, I. 89.10.
86. Pischel, *Vedische Studien* (Stuttgart, 1889-92), Vol. II, p. 86; V.S. Agrawala, *Vision in Long Darkness* (Varanasi, 1963), p. 116; also Keith, op. cit., p. 216.
87. *Infra.*
88. Max Muller, op. cit., pp. 229-30.
89. Bergaigne, *Sacred Book of the East*, XXXII, p. 241.
90. Max Müller, op. cit., p. 228 (Varanasi reprint).
91. Przyluski, "The Great Goddess in India and Iran", *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. X, No. 3 (Sept., 1934), pp. 413 ff.
92. Ibid., p. 413.
93. Ibid., pp. 413-4.
94. Criticism by Keith in his article in *Indian Culture*, Vol. III, p. 72.
95. Also see I.162.22; IV.39.3; V.82.6.
96. RV, VIII.101.15: "To folk who understand I proclaim this that, Injure not Aditi, the Cow, the faultless, Mother of the Rudras, Daughter of the Vasus, Sister of the Ādityas, birthplace of Immortality." See also verse 16.
97. RV, I.164.27, 40; IV.1.6; VII.87.4 (*triḥ sapta nāmāghnyā bibharti*).
98. Also see above.
99. RV, VIII.101.15; X.11.1; IX.96.15; and possibly also X.27.14; X.133.7.
100. See Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda* (Berlin, 1894), pp. 202 ff; and Keith's criticism of his view, op. cit., p. 217.

    Bergaigne has discussed that in the ritual a cow was addressed by the name of Aditi, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 325; also Keith, op. cit., p. 216.
101. RV, VI.67.4; VIII.25.3-4; I.135.3.6.
102. RV, VII.60.5, *ima ṛtasya vāvṛdhurduroṇe sagmāsaḥ putrā aditeradabdhāḥ*.
103. RV, I.61.7; IV.18.1; VIII.48.2.
104. RV, VII.41.2 (*putramaditeryaḥ*).
105. RV, II.17.1; II.41.2.
106. RV, X.72.4.
107. RV, X.88.11; VIII.101.11; X.72.8-9.
108. Seven Āditya gods, RV, IX.114.3.
109. RV, X.72.8-9. According to the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (I.I.9.1), the eight Ādityas are Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryamā, Aṁśa, Bhaga, Dhātā, Indra and Vivasvān. But in Rgvedic mantras, above names of eight deities appear associated with Aditi as her children. Though in the *Sarvānukramaṇī*, which in fact records the later tradition, Dhātā, Savitā, Vivasvān and others are also included under the Aditya category. From the *Ṛgveda* it is also evident that Sūrya was given the status of Aditya last in the list and accepted by the Great Mother to nourish for life only later.
110. AV, VIII.9.21.
111. Ibid., *ashṭayoniraditi*.
112. *Vedic Mythology*, p. 122.
113. Keith, op. cit., p. 217; *Indian Culture*, Vol. III, pp. 72 ff.
114. See above.
115. For Sūrya, RV, X.88.11.

116. For Maitrāvaruṇa, RV, VII.60.5.
117. For Ādityas in general, RV, VIII.18.5; X.185.3.
118. RV, VII.51.1.
119. See Hamsaraja, *Vedic Kośa* (Lahore, 1926), pp. 68, 677-84; also S.K. Dikshit, *The Mother Goddess* (New Delhi, n.d.), p. 91.
120. *Supra*.
121. RV, I.113.19, *aditeranīkam. Origin and Growth of Religion* (Varanasi reprint), p. 230.
122. RV, X.63.3.
123. *Transactions of the Ninth Oriental Congress*, I, pp. 396-410; *Museon*, Vol. XII, pp. 81-90.
124. Op. cit., p. 216.
125. *Supra*.
126. RV, I.153.3; VIII.101.15-6.
127. RV, I.24.1-2.
128. RV, IV.18.11-2, also verses 3, 5, 7-8.
129. RV, IV.18.1-3. See Sieg, *Sagenstroffe des Ṛgveda* (Stuttgart, 1902), pp. 76 f.
130. See also E. Neumann, op. cit., p. 317.
131. See above; *ashṭayonir aditi*, AV, VIII. 9.21.
132. RV, X.72.4.
133. *Elements of Buddhist Iconography* (Cambridge, 1935), p. 72.
134. RV, I.89.10.
135. RV, V.46.6.
136. RV, VIII.25.3.
137. RV, IV.25.5, *urvasmā*; V.46.6, *uruvyachā*; also VS, 21.5, *urūchī*.
138. VS, 21.5=AV, VII.6.2.
139. RV, X.5.7.
140. RV, VIII.101.15.
141. RV, I.166.12.
142. RV, IV.12.4.
143. RV, I.136.3.
144. RV, IV.25.3.
145. RV, VIII.27.5; IV.55.3.
146. RV, VIII.18.4-7.
147. RV, V.42.2.
148. RV, VIII.18.4.
149. RV, I.43.2; cf. also VS, I.14.
150. RV, V.69.3.
151. RV, I.89.10 (and Yāska on it, IV.23): *aditir dyaur aditirantariksham aditir mātā sa pitā sa putraḥ/ viśvedevā aditiḥ pañcha janā aditir jātam aditir janitvam//*
152. RV, I.92.11; I.115.2.; also I.46.1.
153. RV, VII.75.5; also IV.5.11.
154. RV, I.115.2; I.113.1-2; VII.78.3; I.13.12; I.142.7.
155. RV, I.48.1, *divah duhitur*; the phrase is used many times, see S.D. Satavalekar, *Daivata Saṁhitā*, Vol. 8, *Ushādevatā* (Pardi, 1051), p. 28.
156. Of Night, RV, I.113.2-3; X.127.3; of Bhaga, RV, I.123.5.
157. RV, IV.30.9.
158. RV, IV.30.8-10; also II.15.6; 10.138.5.
159. RV, IV.30.8-11.
160. RV, X.70.6; I.113.3; X.127.3; the Āprī Hymns.
161. RV, I.96.5; also I.95.1.
162. RV, V.5.6.
163. Op. cit., p. 124.
164. RV, I.92.10; III.61.1; IV.51.6.
165. RV, I.113.19.
166. RV, I.113.19.
167. RV, IV.2.15; see Wallis, *Cosmology of the Ṛgveda*, p. 72.
168, Macdonell, op. cit., p. 48.
169. RV, V.57.2-3; V.58.5; V.60.5; I.23.10; I.89.7; see also X.123.1 where the Maruts are called the caves of Pṛśni.
170. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 125; Griswold, *The Religion of the Ṛgveda*, p. 229.
171. RV, I.23.12; alluded to also in I.38.8; II.34.2 refers to her radiant lap.
172. For the view considering Rudra to have been originally the baleful destructive agency of Lightning, Macdonell, in *JRAS*, Vol. 27 (1895), p. 957; Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 122; Keith, op. cit., p. 147.
173. RV, VI.66.1; VIII.83.1; VI.48.22.
174. RV, VI.66.3.
175. His commentary on RV, II.34.2.
176. RV, VIII.45.5; VIII.66.2.
177. On RV, X.101.12.
178. *Vedic Mythology*, p. 122.
179. RV, I.23.16.
180. RV, II.41.16.
181. RV, X.86.7.
182. RV, II.41.16.
183. Ibid.
184. RV, X.92.2.
185. RV, VII.59.12.
186. R. Caldwell, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian* (London, 1875), pp. 455, 499; G. Oppert, *Original Inhabitants of India*, p. 42.
187. RV, III.56.5.
188. *Supra*.
189. RV, I.164.10.
190. RV, I.23.20.
191. RV, IV.7.6.
192. For example, see RV, I.23.18.
193. RV, X.17.10; also RV, III.9.2, *mātṛiḥ āpaḥ*.

194. Otherwise water or the store of water is understood by the terms *salilam*, *samudram*, etc.
195. *Vedic Mythology*, p. 85.
196. Ibid.
197. RV, X.125.7.
198. But see Apāṁ Napāt is styled as *nādya* "born of rivers", in RV, II.35.1.
199. RV, X.121.7.
200. See RV, I.161.9.
201. For example RV, VII.47; VII.49; X.9; X.30.
202. Yāska's *Nirukta* 5.13; for other etymological discussions see references quoted by Macdonell, op. cit., 135, fn. 3.
203. RV, X.10.4, *apsu apyā cha yoshā*. Cp. Keith, op. cit., p. 182.
204. Ibid.
205. RV, I.153.3; VIII.101.15; X.11.1.
206. Conjointly with Dyauh: RV, I.146.2-3; III.6.4; IV.23.10; IX.70.6.
207. RV, I.85.3; I.160.3; also X.123.1, where the Maruts are calves of Pṛśni.
208. RV, VIII.89.11.
209. RV, I.92.1-18; I.96.5; I.113.1-20; I.134.4.
210. *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 124, 150; RV, III.55.13.
211. RV, III.55.1.
212. Ibid.
213. RV, X.133.7, and also IV.41.5.
214. RV, III.58.1.
215. RV, I.188.8; III.4.8; VII.2.8; IX.5.8; X.70.8; X.110.8. Usually the names of three great goddesses occur as Sarasvatī, Bhāratī and Iḷā but I.142.9 mentions Mahī and Hotrā in addition and I.13.9; V.5.8 Mahī in place of Bhāratī.
216. RV, I.13.9.
217. RV, V.5.8.
218. RV, X.110.8; also X.70.8.
219. RV, III.4.8; VII.2.8.
220. RV, III.4.8; VII.2.8.
221. RV, II.1.11.
222. RV, I.3.13; X.64.9; X.75.5; VII.95.1; II.41.16; VII.36.6, etc. The controversy regarding the identity of the river whom Sarasvatī personifies will be out of place in the present study. However, for it see Macdonell, op. cit., pp. 87-8 and various views quoted by him.
223. RV, II.41.16, *ambitame nadītame devitame sarasvati.*
224. RV, VI.61; VII.95; VII.96.
225. Griswold, *The Religion of the Ṛgveda*, pp. 301-2; and see RV, VI.62.2, 8; VII.95.1.
226. RV, VII.36.6; Macdonell, op. cit., p. 86.
227. See above.
228. See also J. Muir, *Old Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. V, p. 338.
229. *Infra*.
230. *Vedic Religion*, trans., Vol. I, 324.
231. Op. cit , p. 124.
232. Trans. by Griffith.
233. The same stanza is repeated, III.1.23; III.5.11; III.6.11; III.7.11; III.15.7; III.22.5; III.23.5.
234. See IX.62.3; X.70.8; X.64.11; X.91.4.
235. Also cp. IV.50.8; III.53.1; III.54.20.
236. See above.
237. As done by Sāyaṇa on RV, III.29.3.
238. As taken by Sāyaṇa on RV, III.29.4.
239. Cp RV, III.7.5, where she is 'prayer' or 'chant' (Bergaigne, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 325).
240. Cp. the literal juxtaposition of "Iḷā's place" and "Pṛthivī's navel", RV, III.29.4.
241. Prof. K.R. Potdar is the latest scholar to make a detailed and analytical study of the Āprī Hymns in the *Ṛgveda* and later texts: "Āprī Hymns in the *Ṛgveda*: a study", *J. of the University of Bombay*, Sept. 1945-Sept. 1946; "Apri Hymns in the *Ṛgveda*", *12th AIOC*, 1943-44, *Proceedings*, Benares Hindu University, 1946, pp. 211-22; "Āpri Hymn in the *Atharvaveda* (V.27)", *13th AIOC*, 1946, Nagpur, *Proceedings*, pp. 47-56. As shown by his studies, there had been one single Āprī Hymn at first which became prevalent in various priestly families of the Vedic sages and their patrons in several poetic adaptations of their own; this fact, along with other valid grounds, not only explains the conformity to each other of their contents, but also that it was originally a self-contained propitiatory (*āprī*) rite of very simple performance, perhaps a minor daily offering, to which these single hymns were devoted, and "such a hymn was not to characterise any specialised sacrifice in honour of any particular deity but one where all the divinities would receive their share without any distinction." However, he thinks that the Āprī hymn was originally not of a subordinate character so as to be attached to any bigger sacrifice, or the animal sacrifice as it later on came to be in the Brāhmaṇa rituals.
242. K.R. Potdar, in *12th AIOC*, *Proceedings*, p. 222.

243. RV, V.46.7-8.
244. RV, X.86.1-23.
245. RV, X.159.1-6.
246. RV, I.106.6; IV.30.17; IV.31.7; VIII.14.2; VIII.61.5; X.24.2; etc.
247. RV, VII.20.10; and also V.31.6, *saktivah.* Also RV, III.57.3.
248. RV, I.56.4.
249. R. Shamasastry, *Eclipse Cult in the Vedas, Bible and Koran* (Mysore, 1940).
250. RV, X.85.47.
251. RV, I.22.10; IV.34.1; V.41.8.
252. RV, I.22.10; VII.38.5; VII.40.6.
253. RV, X.103.12.
254. RV, X.101.8-9.
255. RV, VII.15.12.
256. RV, I.24.9; V.41.17; VI.74.2; X.10.11; etc.
257. See Griffith, *Ṛgveda Translation* (Benares, 1897), Vol. II, p. 545, fn.
258. RV, V.61.17; X.127.6.
259. RV, IV.2.11; V.62.8.
260. RV, VII.15.12.
261. RV, VII.7.1; see also Macdonell, op. cit., p. 123.
262. RV, IV.2.11.
263. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 123.
264. RV, VII.15.12: *Ditiścha dāti vāryam.*
265. *Supra.*
266. RV, I.22.10; VII.38.5; VII.40.6.
267. RV, III.62.3; VII.34.22.
268. RV, X.85.47.
269. RV, IV.57.6.
270. RV, VIII.91.5-6.
271. RV, I.18.5.
272. RV, V.41.17.
273. RV, X.76.4.
274. RV, X.151.1-5.
275. RV, I.40.3.
276. Pischel, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 202-16; Keith, op. cit., p. 211.
277. X.167.3.
278. *Supra.*
279. RV, X.59.5-6.
280. *Der Ṛgveda* (Vols. I-V, 1876-1883), on RV, I.96.1; also his *Uber die neusesten arbeiten*, p. 87.
281. *Uber die altindische Gottin Dhiṣanā und verwandtes*, pp. 26 ff.
282. Also RV, I.102.1; VI.11.3; VI.19.2.
283. RV, I.22.10.
284. Ludwig, op. cit.
285. See my *Pūrṇa Kalaśa or the Vase of Plenty* (Varanasi, 1965), p. 4.
286. RV, IV.34.1.
287. RV, I.109.4.
288. RV, VIII.15.7.
289. RV, V.41.8.
290. RV, VIII.90.3.
291. RV, III.49.4.
292. RV, X.146.1-6.
293. Griffith, *Translation*, Vol. II, pp. 589-90.
294. Griswold, op. cit., p. 306.
295. RV, II.32.4-8.
296. *Ait. Brāh.* 7.11; *Gopatha Brāh.* II.1.10; *Shadviṁśa Brāh.*
297. Weber, *Indische Studlen*, Vol. 5, pp. 228 ff.
298. Ibid.; see also Keith, op. cit., p. 199.
299. RV, II.32.8.
300. See Sāyaṇa on RV, II.32.8.
301. *Infra.*
302. R. Briffault, *The Mothers* (London, 1927), Ch. 19.
303. Ibid.
304. RV, X.85.40.
305. Briffault, op. cit., Chs. 19, 23. As he observes (Vol. II, p. 603), "It is a wide-spread feature of lunar deities that like the Moirai they are threefold or triune."
306. Translation from Griffith, Vol. I, p. 299.
307. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 125.
308. The common folk belief in the moon as spinstress; see Briffault, op. cit., s.v.
309. On RV, V.42.12.
310. *Garbhaṁ dhehi sinīvāli garbhaṁ dhehi sarasvati/* RV, X.184.2=AV, V.25.3.
311. RV, II.32.6 and 7. J. Gonda suggests the translation of *viśpatnī* as "mistress of the people" (*Aspects of Early Viṣṇuiṣm*, p. 226).
312. *Prajāṁ devī didiḍḍhi naḥ/* RV, II.32.6.
313. See above.
314. *Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology* (London, 1959), p. 56. But see Yāska's (5.5) etymology of the word *sinam.*
315. RV, III.56.5.
316. *ṛtāvarīryoshanāstrisro apyāḥ.*
317. See also RV, III.29.3, where Agni is the son of Iḷā.
318. RV, I.31.2; III.55.6, 7; V.II.3; etc.
319. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 91.
320. RV, IX.1.7; IX.6.5.
321. RV, III.29.13.
322. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 91.
323. *Daśa svasāro agruvaḥ samīchīḥ pumāṁsaṁ jātamabhi saṁ rabhante/*
324. RV, IX.1.7-8; IX.6.5; IX.28.4; IX.55.3.
325. W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India* (1896), pp. 56, 67; H. Whitehead, *The Village Gods of South India*

(Calcutta, 1921), pp. 29, 32, 39; A.P. Karamarkar, *The Religions of India*, Vol. I (Lonavala, 1950), pp. 106 ff; D.D. Kosambi, *Myth and Reality* (Bombay, 1962), pp. 86 ff.

326. RV, X.5.5.
327. See *Muṇḍaka Up*. 1.2.4.
328. RV, I.141.2.
329. See RV, I.72.8; VIII.85.1; IX.86.36; IX.102.4.
330. RV, I.191.14. For Sapta Svasāraḥ, see further RV, I.164.3; VII.66.15; VIII.41.2; X.5.5; and Sapta Mataraḥ, RV, IX.102.4; Sapta Vāṇiḥ as said to have conceived Agni in their womb, RV, III.1.6; III.7.1.

GODDESSES IN THE LATER VEDIC EVOLUTION

THE later Vedic literature, considerably advanced in its authorship and treatment of subject, presents a more clear picture of early Indian religion and thought than what we know from the *Ṛgveda*. The growth of early Indian religion and its subsequent tradition appears to have been featured by several factors, namely the fusion of Ṛgvedic people with indigenous races along with their cultures and beliefs, a significant awareness of numerous folk cults of the soil, and a transformation of religious life and thought under these and other impacts. In later Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇa literature the female divinities seem further popular, and besides those known from the *Ṛgveda* an array of new goddesses appears in this period.

Aditi, the Mother of Universe

Aditi is the Great Mother *par excellence* in the later Vedic Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇa texts. She is eulogised as the Mighty Mother, whose sway is just and rule strong.[1] Aditi, the Queen-of-Order never decays and acts as gracious guide and protectress of her votaries.[2] She is the archetype of motherhood and all men are her children.[3] She is now a regular mother of the gods and mother of the world.[4] Her association with fertility and childbirth is emphatically known.

She is the blest goddess who gave birth to Indra;[5] when desirous of a son she herself put on an amulet,[6] and the efficacy of that amulet now facilitates the human childbirth as well. This amulet is described to be a ring which wards off evil as well as protects the progeny.[7] Aditi was offered worship and propitiated for favour on various occasions in the life of a child is fully evident from the *Atharvaveda*.[8]

In her universal aspect, 'she is all whatever there is, father, mother, child, and begetting'.[9] The new trait of Aditi mentioned here in addition to the concept in RV I.89.10 is her identity with concrete sexual union or begetting (*prajanana*).[10] Thus, as the mother of the Ādityas, she had to set example of motherhood again and again. The legend enumerated in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*[11] has it as follows: When Aditi became desirous of a son the Sādhya gods cooked *brahmaudana*, eating which the goddess conceived and thereby were born Dhātā and Aryamā. This process is said to have occurred repeatedly so that other Āditya gods were produced successively. They were born pairwise as is explicitly stated in the *Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa*,[12] where connected rites for getting the double bliss of progeny are described. In the same way by performing the 'Twin-over-night-rites' of the Ādityas the twins are born.

Another significant factor leading to Aditi's high position in popular worship was her close connection with the sacrifice. A justifying tale for this achieved affiliation occurs in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*.[13] As it has: "The sacrifice went away from the gods; the gods could do nothing, they could not discern it. They said to Aditi, 'through thee let us discern the sacrifice'. She said, 'So be it, but let me choose a boon from you'. 'Choose' (they replied). This boon she chose, 'Let the sacrifices begin from me and end with me'. 'So be it' (they replied). Therefore, there is a pap to Aditi as introductory (offering), (a pap) to Aditi as concluding (offering), for as a boon by her was this chosen."

In *yajña* rituals the cow stood for Aditi; in the *Ṛgveda* itself we are told: "Injure not Aditi the cow sinless, Mother of Rudras, Daughter of Vasus, Sister of

Ādityas and the birthplace of Immortality."[14] The sacrificial cow also signified priestly fees or *dakshiṇā* of the *yajña*, thus the name Dakshiṇā qualifies the cow as Aditi and is spoken of as a goddess, the ancient's Milch-Cow.[15] This identity is well-known in the Brāhmaṇas.[16]

Thus, a story of the union of Yajña and Dakshiṇā is found in the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*.[17] The sacrificer is consecrated with a girdle, his wife with a necklet (*yoktra*) for the sake of offspring. "The sacrificer reflected on Dakshiṇā and had intercourse with her. Indra perceived this and reflected, 'he who will be born from this union will be this world'. He entered her; from her verily was Indra born; he reflected, 'he who hence other than I will be born will be this world'. Stroking her womb he split it, she became barren after birth, and it is the origin of the cow which is barren after birth. He wrapped the *yoni* in his hand and deposited it among wild beasts; it became the horn of the black antelope. The horn of the black antelope is handed over to the sacrificer by saying 'thou art the birthplace of Indra; harm me not'. Verily he makes Yajña united with the Yoni, Dakshiṇā with the Yoni, Indra with the Yoni for union with the womb." Further elaborating the efficiency of the black antelope's horn, it is identified with the womb in fact by placing womb in womb the sacrificer gets a womb for his offspring.[18]

In this mythical legend several characteristic features of the great fertility goddess are put together. They may be analysed as follows: (1) mother of Indra; (2) after giving birth to Indra, that genital organ of the mother must be rendered barren or destroyed; (3) the *yoni* of the fertility goddess is verily represented by the black antelope's horn; (4) efficacy of the horn as a powerful sex symbol and its ritualistic influence upon human begetting.

The last point indicates some symbolic connection of the black-buck's horn and Aditi, who is here identical with Dakshiṇā. The destruction of the womb after Indra's birth signifies a similar trait as we have in the statement that 'for bearing eight sons Aditi had eight separate wombs'.[19] The black-buck's horn was the symbol, and possibly an attribute of the goddess.

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[20] (explaining VS IV.10) gives the legend of Vāk where, instead of Dakshiṇā, Vāk is coupled by Yajña. Later in the book, Vāk or Speech is identified with the Soma-cow, with Dakshiṇā, and with Aditi the double-headed.[21] As it is put: "Yajña united with Vāk . . . Indra entered into that union. Now when he was born after a year's time, Indra with a view that no better shall be born from that vigorous womb, tore it off and put it on the head of Yajña; for the black-buck is Yajña, its skin is the same as that Yajña, and its horn is the same as that womb."[22]

As has been discussed by Dr. Moti Chandra, fertility and sex symbolism of the horn was widely accepted in the Vedic period.[23] As emblematic to the female organ, its fertility significance was much emphasised. The newly-wed wife was approached by a team of women carrying horns in their hand to ensure her fertility.[24] Noteworthy is the statement[25] where Rudra's urine is qualified by a horn (*vishāṇakā*), regarded curative remedy of the wind disease and called the 'navel of immortality'.[26] The last term is also an attribute of the goddess Aditi,[27] and of Madhukaśā[28] (possibly identical with Aditi as the former is called here the mother-of-Ādityas).

One important aspect added to the nature of Aditi is her association with

Vishṇu as his consort (*vishṇupatnī*).[29] The clarity of a statement made in the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*[30] while treating the Horse Sacrifice is far from any doubt and invokes Aditi as follows: "Prop of the sky, supporter of the earth, ruling this world, Lady of Vishṇu, all-extending, seeking food, with prosperity, may Aditi be auspicious to us in her life."[31] As pointed out by J. Gonda,[32] Aditi and Vishṇu "occur in the same context in the mantras accompanying the girdling of the sacrificer's wife (VS I.30 etc.) (*ādityai rāsnā'si* etc., see *Vedic Conc.*, p. 51) by this act the priest intimates her as her husband's associate in the rite. Aditi here is the earth, represented by this woman. They further appear together in the formulas used in VS 2.2, and explained in ŚB 1.3.3.4f, which are to accompany the pouring of water on the sacrificial grass and subsequent taking of a bunch of grass: Aditi is stated to be the earth, Vishṇu the sacrifice."

Possibly, at the first stage, Vishṇu was identified as an Āditya god. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, in one passage, knows Vishṇu as Yajña who is held to be Āditya.[33] Further it declares that Vishṇu's cut off head was comprehended as Āditya.[34] Though Vishṇu was the last to be admitted in the class of Twelve Ādityas,[35] his relation with the gods belonging originally to the list of Aditi's sons, seems indicated even in the *Atharvaveda*.[36] In post-Vedic literature Vishṇu in his dwarf incarnation is said to have taken his birth from Aditi by Kaśyapa Prajāpati.[37] Kaśyapa 'Tortoise' as Prajāpati's name is a popular idea in the later Vedic texts,[38] alluded to once even in the *Ṛgveda*.[39] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, in fact, qualifies Tortoise Prajāpati as Āditya.[40] Thus Aditi's mention as 'consort of Vishṇu' remains only a transitional myth, speculated at the time when Vishṇu was gaining in ascendency in the pantheon. The fertility aspect is a well-known trait of Vishṇu's character, explicitly defined in his epithets such as *ghṛtayoni*, *śipivishṭa*, *sujaniman*. and in his role in the *Garbhasthāsīḥ* hymn and its rituals.[41] Not only Aditi, but most of the goddesses presiding over fertility and abundance are qualified in this period by the epithet *vishṇupatnī*, including Sinīvālī,[42] Kshmādevī[43] and Lakshmī.[44] It only denotes that at some stage a section of religionists considered these goddesses, including even Aditi, as spouses of Vishṇu; but in case of Aditi this trait hardly appears to have continued, for her mothership of Vishṇu-Vāmana remained a prevailing myth in later tradition.

In Brāhmaṇa texts Aditi is often identified with the earth.[45] 'This Earth is goddess Aditi who is omniform.'[46] This identification is, no doubt, hinted at in the *Yajurveda*[47] and possibly in the *Ṛgveda*.[48] There might have been a point for this correspondence through the connotation of the term *mahī*, that qualifies Aditi, and means at the same time both 'great' and 'earth'.[49] Moreover, the equation of an eminent Mother-goddess like Aditi with the earth was conveniently understood, the latter being widely accepted prototype of all motherhood and productivity. While enumerating the rituals of the 'Introductory Sacrifice', it is said in the *Kaushītaki Brāhmaṇa* that Aditi when offered libation discerned the zenith. "Aditi is this (earth); therefore, on this (earth) plants grow upright, trees upright, men upright, Agni is kindled upright, whatever there is on this (earth) that stretches upright, for this was the quarter discerned by her."[50]

A curious etymology of Aditi's name occurs in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*:[51] "Whatever the god Death created he sets about devouring; and because he eats everything, hence the name 'Aditi'; and verily, he who thus knows the nature of

Aditi becomes an eater of everything, and all food becomes his." However this derivation, needless to say, was a forced one, only semantically justified to suit the context. An allusively hinted point in the above passage can be made out as reflecting the later concept of 'Food-granting' aspect of the great goddess (*annapūrṇā*). Though understood only slightly at this stage of mythology, a number of connected myths appear likely to have contributed to perfecting this aspect of the goddess; for example, Iḍā a corn-goddess, the goddess Earth and Virāj a cow-goddess, each underlined the same aspect, and combining with Aditi (AV 18.4.30),[52] or even independently, might have suggested the imagery of a World-satiating Great Goddess.

The idea of 'assimilating' as suggested in the above Brāhmaṇa passage is also alluded to by an epithet of Aditi. Indra is called the son of Nishṭigrī, who is Aditi.[53] Sāyaṇa has explained the word *nishṭigrī* as meaning 'who swallows up her rival Nishṭi or Diti'.[54] But the later myth of rivalry between Aditi and Diti has hardly any allusion in the Saṁhitās. Diti appears to be merely an antithesis or complement of Aditi, just a name mentioned thrice in the *Ṛgveda*, twice in collocation with Aditi.[55] In AV XI.3.4, both the names occur conjointly: Aditi as the support of the winnowing basket which is Diti. In a similar concurrence, Diti and Aditi are mentioned as the head and skull of the Vrātya Being.[56] At one place, the great invulnerable gods are described as sons of Aditi and Diti together.[57] However, till the post-Vedic period, Diti remains an obscure name, possibly a lesser personification of 'the act of giving', from *dā* 'to give' (*ditiścha dāti vāryam* RV VII.15.12).[58] Aditi, an altogether different concept, and Diti got further associated with each other in mythology only due to an indiscriminate phonetic correlation.

Not only Diti appears to have been confused as the counterpart or contrast of Aditi: Aditi 'bondlessness' and Diti 'bondage',[59] but even Aditi was attributed *inter alia* a 'false' character through etymological considerations. An allusion to such forced derivation may even be found in RV IV.2.11, where Agni is besought to grant Diti and preserve from Aditi, meaning 'giving' and 'non-giving' respectively.[60] Such statement obviously had appeared due to a misunderstanding and was hard to reconcile with the 'liberal' character of a great Mother-goddess like Aditi.[61] Thus the opposing trait of 'illiberality' was rejected and justifyingly, a tempered derivation is found in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* as follows: 'Aditi is this (earth), as this (earth) gives (*dadate*) everything here'.[62] Possibly, with a similar implication, Yāska in his *Nirukta*[63] speaks of Aditi as '*adīnā devamātā*'.

The motif of the preparation of *audana* or food by Aditi when desiring progeny[64] appears, however, to denote her aspect of a nourishing mother, who is justly called 'sustainer of the world' (*viśvasya bhartrī*).[65]

Prof. Przyluski rightly observes that the compound *madhukaśā* appearing in AV IX.1 stands as one of the epithets of Aditi.[66] He regards that 'She is called "she whose whip is honey" because honey is, among all other ailments, that which gives vigour just as the whip of Aditi is stimulant as she is the goddess of fecundity.'[67] The 'Honey-whip' is often connected with the Aśvins as their attribute.[68] But its real significance as qualifying Aditi is obscure and has not been explained convincingly by any scholar.[69] However it is said to be the tongue of the Skambha deity.[70] If the traditionally come down meaning of the term *kaśā* as given by the commentators[71] is to be accepted, namely 'speech' or 'voice', the epithet *madhukaśā* given to Aditi becomes simplified as regards its sense and symbolism. But this also is little convincing.[72]

Understood as 'bondless freedom', Aditi is invoked in the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*[73] to loosen the noose or bondage. For the sake of getting 'security from injury' (*aditaye*) the Ādityas are appealed to in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.[74] Here the word denotes only 'sinlessness' or 'non-injury'; but elsewhere the same expression is seen as identifying Aditi with the earth: "Aditi is this earth: thus 'sinless may he belong to thee (Ādityas) and to her'."[75]

It is stated in the *Atharvaveda* that out of Aditi's body the strength of elephant was derived, and it is the accordant Aditi who with other gods grants the possession over this beast.[76] Though the significance of this myth cannot be made out with certainty, there is doubtless here an early statement regarding the affinity of the elephant and the goddess. Several other interesting epithets occur for Aditi, namely *viśva-rūpā*,[77] *kanīnikā*,[78] *ubhayataḥśīrshṇī* (*-suparṇī*),[79] *viśvadevyavati*.[80] What the word *Kanīnikā*, "eye-ball", signified as an epithet of Aditi is difficult to guess.

The immense character of Aditi is fully reflected in her glorification as the Great Mother, on whom this entire universe of life has settled.[81] Her lap (or generative organ, *upastha*).[82] The cow given away as the price of Soma-plant is considered representative of the Cosmic Cow Aditi,[83] who has a head on either side.[84] According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, she in her aspect as Vāk is double-headed as her two heads face east and west.[85] The *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*[86] explains that as to Aditi belong the opening and the concluding oblations of the sacrifices, she is called 'double-headed'. The *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā*[87] also justifies this '*ubhayataḥśīrshatva*' of Aditi by the same explanation.

As part of the Soma Sacrifice, there occurs a detail of the *Prāyaṇīyeshṭi* or 'Opening Oblation' in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.[88] Aditi plays the presiding role in its rituals and the invitatory formula to her is a verse from the *Atharvaveda* (VII. 6.2).[89] The ritual identifies Aditi with the earth and has a legend at the back of this sacrifice. Thus it is given: The gods while sending the sacrifice to the earth, extended her (the earth) from it. On this, she confounded the sacrifice which was revealed by her only later when the gods agreed to allow her a share in its offering. Thus there are held both the Opening and the Concluding oblations to the goddess Aditi; for Aditi is truly this earth.[90]

The Concluding Oblation (*Udayanīya*) of the Soma Sacrifice enumerated later in this *Brāhmaṇa* furnishes further information.[91] Here it is said that 'to Aditi belongs the opening, to Aditi the concluding (oblation); for Aditi is this earth'. As noted by Eggeling, 'In the Soma sacrifice, the Prāyaṇīya and Udayanīya may be said to correspond to the Fore-offerings and After-offerings (*prayāja* and *anuyāja*) of the New and Full-moon Sacrifice.'[92]

The number eight was regarded especially sacred to Aditi as she is celebrated to have eight wombs, eight children and the eighth night (or eighth lunar day in each half-month, the *Ashṭamī*) is enjoined for offering her libation.[93] A goddess is mentioned by the name Ashṭakā or Ekāshṭakā[94] who apparently personifies the eighth day after the Full-moon of the new year. She is celebrated to be a divinity of great importance and a goddess bestowing riches, children and happiness on her votaries. In AV III.10.1-13, she is lauded as the mother of Indra and Soma, the daughter of Prajāpati and the consort of the Year. Doubtless, she was supposed to be identical with Aditi for Indra and Soma are her sons.

As may appear from the *Atharvaveda*[95] and the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*,[96] originally this word represented a sort of new-year festival held on Ekāshṭakā or the first Eighth day after full moon, and was deified as a goddess. Later, the Ashṭakā days are raised in number in the Gṛhyasūtra texts and the term ceases to enjoy the status of a goddess.[97]

In many a passage, as noted above, Aditi is equated with the cow. She the cow has several names in the *Yajurveda*[98] including such as *Iḍā*, *Ranti*, *Havyā*, *Kāmyā*, *Chandrā*, *Jyoti*, *Aditi*, *Sarasvatī*, *Mahī* and *Viśruti*. The exact significance of these sacrificial appellations to a cow cannot be made out. They may either be interpreted in their literal sense, or as independent names of the goddesses, for whom the cow was understood to be the prototype.

Virāj the Cosmic Principle

Elsewhere, in VS XIII.43, Aditi is called Virāj, the cow which should not be injured.[98] Although Virāj is not included in the above list, it occurs throughout the Vedic texts as the name of a dominant spirit, often playing the role of a great goddess, and occasionally also as a male or sexless entity. The later part of the *Ṛgveda* (X.90.5) knows Virāj as the 'ruling principle', next only to the cosmic Purusha. This aspect was further elaborated and Virāj at places has been identified with Prajāpati,[99] with Agni,[100] Yajña,[101] or called Prajāpati's creation,[102] or the 'father of Brahman'.[103]

But the identity of Virāj with the principle of motherhood is largely expressed in the *Atharvaveda* and connected texts. Her glorification forms the subject of several passages in this Veda.[104] Regarding her real character, a number of questions are asked to be answered in a purposeful discussion.[105] In origin, the name appears to be a mere abstraction, at first speculatively evolved as the counterpart of Purusha; presumably personifying his 'ruling authority', and also 'universal extension'.[106] Soon we find this figure endowed with mysterious functions, taking part in the making of the universe, acting as its eminent ruler, and sometimes even confused with other myths and fanciful concepts.[107]

In the capacity of a goddess, she is regarded as the daughter of Prajāpati, or Agni, or Purusha, and coeval in status with Aditi and even identified with her. She is lauded as the great mother cow;[108] elsewhere the Cow of Plenty,[109] who from the description appears none other than the universal nature herself: 'Indra was her calf, Gāyatrī her rope, and clouds her udder; her four teats were Rathantara, Bṛhat, Yajñāyajñīya and Vāmadevya. The gods milked from her the Plants, all the wide expanses, the Waters and the Sacrifice.'[110] It is said that she is killed and has her birth again at the end of a year, a month, a fortnight and every day, as she approaches the Plants, the Fathers, the Gods and Men respectively.[111] She herself is the breathless existence but moves by the breath of living creatures.[112] That Virāj who touches,[113] takes form of all existence—some see her, some see her not. So it is proclaimed: 'who has perceived Virāj's duplication (or pairing), who her seasons and who her ordering? (And who knows) her steps, how many times milked out, who her abode and number of her dawnings?'[114] As if answering to these enigmas, the identity of Virāj is revealed celebrating her as the infinite nature and the mighty creatrix: 'This same is she that first shone forth; having entered other beings she moves about; exalted powers are within her; the lady, the generatrix, who comes anew has prevailed.'[115]

The statements made here are quite perspicuous. She comes anew, i.e., again and again, remaining always new, by this technique or miraculous potency of hers she triumphs over all creation and its recurring processes.

In the stanzas that follow the above verse are enumerated those elements which represent various powers of nature, manifested according to the series of numbers, beginning from two to eight.[116] Virāj, in fact, qualifies the first primordial principle, corresponding to the number one, that was this universe *in principio*. At her birth all feared Virāj.[117] Her entering the Household Fire, the Āhavanīya and Dakshiṇa Fires, is explicitly stated.[118] He who knows the secret of her descending in the Household Fire becomes by performing house-rituals the lord of household.[119] Her invokation in the village assembly is *inter alia* alluded to in AV 8.10.5. Elsewhere, she is called the Cow of Plenty, known by the sages as Vāk and Virāj and the daughter of Kāma.[120] It is mentioned in detail that as she approached various sections of the creation one by one, they addressed her by distinct names, the Asuras as '*Māyā*' (Illusion); the Fathers as '*Svadhā*' (Food); men as '*Irāvatī*' (Rich-in-cheer); the Seven Sages as 'Brahmaṇvati' (Rich-in-*brahman*); the gods as '*Urjā*' (Vigour); the Apsarases and Gandharvas as '*Puṇyagandhā*' (Fragrant-scented); the Itarajanas (i.e. Yakshas) as '*Tirodhā*' (Concealment); the Serpents as '*Vishavatī*' (Venomous).[121]

Apparently, the seer of this hymn has attempted in these statements to intend that a coalition of many a goddess, both from high and low sections of the society, was taking place in this period. At this stage the mighty figure of the goddess Virāj served as the basis of this coveted synthesis in the rapidly growing pantheon. But subsequently, however, the abstract personality of Virāj herself appears to have relegated into the background and given way to other emerging goddesses in the post-Vedic religion, as one finds little about her in later mythology and worship.

Virāj is sometimes also identified in the Brāhmaṇas with food,[122] cattle[123] and women,[124] with divinities like Śrī,[125] the Earth,[126] Agni[127] and Vāk.[128] She is said to be the wife of Purusha,[129] Varuṇa[130] and Vishṇu.[131] We have elsewhere attempted to show how through Virāj, with whom Śrī is often identified, Śrī came to be associated with Purusha-Prajāpati-Vishṇu as his consort.[132]

The Cow-Goddesses

The cow as a prototype of deified motherhood appears to be widely revered in the Vedic society and religion. At one occasion or the other we find most of the goddesses identified or represented with a cow in the Yajña rituals. It is interesting to see in the *Yajurveda* a list of names by which the cow inviolable (*aghnyā*) is addressed by the gods. They are Iḍā, Rantā, Havyā, Kāmyā, Chandrā, Jyoti, Aditi, Sarasvatī, Mahī and Viśruti.[133] For each of these names several citations may be collected from the texts. In fact, some more names or epithets of the cow may also be added to the above list, viz., Pṛśni (the Speckled),[134] Virāj,[135] Kāmadughā and Viśvarūpā,[136] Vaiśvadevī,[137] etc.

The Waters and the Apsarases

The personification of Āpaḥ, the Waters, representing a distinct principle of motherhood as primeval generatrixes of this creation,[138] does not appear to have emerged much beyond the natural phenomenon. Theoretically they are called the mothers (*ambayaḥ*).[139] All this was obtained[140] or takes birth from the Waters.[141] The earth is said to be established on them.[142] They are addressed as the all-soothing great goddesses.[143] According to the *Atharvaveda*, they received Agni as their germ.[144] In their amidst the divine king Varuṇa is believed to move and stay.[145]

The Āpaḥ goddess is described as the consort of Varuṇa,[146] the supreme lord of all oceanic waters, and thus given the epithet Varuṇānī.[147] In later mythology the goddess character of the universal waters, however, survived in Varuṇa's female counterpart or Varuṇānī, but she also did receive no specific function or status.

Apart the water-cosmology, a general belief in the fertility of the common water appears to have inspired several kindred ideas and motifs. In the *Tait. Āraṇyaka*[147] a light is said to be born from the waters. The lotus or the lotus-leaf properly is called the back of the waters;[148] or that itself is the waters.[149] Similar in idea is the statement that in the beginning this all was the waters; there the one Prajāpati appeared on a lotus-leaf.[150] On the basis of such speculations, the myth of the Brahman creating a Brahma on the lotus seems to have been suggested.[151]

Contrasted to the indistinct personification of the waters as an element, a belief in watery nymphs as Apsarases seems to be of a much developed character.[152] They were doubtless a semidivine class of female beings, who take their origin in the waters (*apsu yoshā*) and associate with the Gandharvas, who also are similar beings, but male in sex and connected more or less with the high region in air or sky. Both of these groups are often mentioned together. Their love is stated to be the prototype of human marriage.

The character of Apsaras as celestial water nymph is evident in the later Saṁhitās. Particularly in the *Atharvaveda*, their home is said to be in the waters. From there they come quickly and go in a trice.[153] They are sometimes asked to depart from the vicinity of men to the river and the bank of the waters.[154] Possibly here we have a hint to their harmful nature and to a popular belief of their stay in the rivers, pools and other reservoirs of the earthly waters. But elsewhere, the Apsarases, accompanying the Gandharva Viśvāvasu, are said to belong to clouds, lightning and stars.[155] They are invoked as goddesses (*devīḥ*), and described as haunters of darkness, having shrill in voice, loving the dice and as maddeners of the mind.[156] Frequently they are said to be the wives of the Gandharvas (*gandharvapatnī*).[157] They are described in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* as swimming about in a lake in the form of aquatic birds.[158]

Sometimes they are spoken of to reside in the banyan and the fig-trees, in which their cymbals and lutes resound.[159] The *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*[160] adds to this category other varieties of the fig-tree like *udumbara* and *plaksha*, where the Apsarases make their dwelling along with the Gandharvas. The Apsarases and Gandharvas haunting such trees are asked to be propitious to a passing wedding procession.[161] In another context they are described to be engaged in dance, music and play.[162]

In the *Jaiminīya Upanishad Brāhmaṇa*[163] the Apsarases are said to be connected with the laughter, the play and the sexual pleasure. Though earlier in the *Atharvaveda* both the Apsarases and the Gandharvas are said to live by the auspicious fragrance (*puṇyagandha*),[164] in the Brāhmaṇa texts a separate field of activity is allotted to each of them. According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[165] the Gandharvas and Apsarases make themselves busy with sweet scent (*gandha*) and beauteous form[166] (respectively). Hence if any one goes to his mate he cultivates sweet scent and a beautiful appearance. Weber thinks that here we find reference to the etymological explanation of the term *apsaras* from '*apsas*' meaning 'beauty', similar to the apparent derivation of *gandharva* from *gandha* meaning odour.[167]

Ushā, the daughter of Prajāpati, is stated to have come out in front of the gods as taking the form of an Apsaras.[168] By the common belief, the Apsarases were said to be of great beauty.[169]

One Apsaras known as early as the *Ṛgveda*[170] is Urvaśī. She is, on one hand, mentioned as the mother of the sage Vasishṭha[171] and, on the other, the legend of her love with Pururavas is found in a full hymn.[172] She is connected in this account with water, as filling the atmosphere and traversing space.[173] The interesting details of the story are made further available by the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,[174] *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā*[175] and the *Bṛhaddevatā*.[176] Some other Apsaras names known in Vedic literature include Ugrajit, Ugraṁpaśyā and Rāshṭrabhṛt;[177] the *Yajurveda* gives ten names, in five pairs, who keep company with the gods Agni, Vāyu, Sūrya and Parjanya.[178] They are Puñjikasthalā, Kratusthalā, Menakā, Sahajanyā, Pramlochantī, Anumlochantī, Viśvāchī, Ghṛtāchī, Urvaśī and Pūrvachitti. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* also knows the Apsaras Śakuntalā, who at Nāḍapit conceived Bharata, who conquered the whole earth and performed more than a thousand horse-sacrifices to Indra.[179]

The *Kaushītaki Upanishad* regards the Apsarases as a class of divinities put at a par with the Ambās (Mothers), Ambāyavīs (Nurses) and Ambayas (Little Mothers).[180] There are mentioned in this text five hundred Apsarases, of whom one hundred are said to move with fruits, one hundred with ointments, one hundred with garlands, one hundred with vestments and one hundred with powdered aromatics.[181] This clearly underlies the tendency at work in this period of multiplying the number of such low-graded entities such as the Apsarases. They are allotted here the functions of attending toilet-females.

Pṛthivī the Earth

The long Atharvavedic hymn[182] dedicated to Pṛthivī, the personified earth goddess, has been partly treated above.[183] Every stanza of the hymn glorifies her by a number of poetic and mythical statements; but the physical basis of her personification is never lost sight of. She is connected in various functions with Indra,[184] Vishṇu,[185] Parjanya,[186] Brahman,[187] Prajāpati,[188] Viśvakarman,[189] Agni,[190] and Dyauḥ.[191] She is said to support both the fool and the wise, and the good and evil in a like manner. An explicit reference to the myth of the Boar uplifting her is made in one verse.[192] It is further said that she holds control over such divine beings as the Gandharvas and Apsarases, and over all malignant spirits and demons, the Piśāchas and Rakshases.[193]

The Earth as mother is said to have manifold manifestations or forms.[194] AV ·VI.17.1-4, the charm to ensure successful conception, particularly of a male child, seems entirely to be allotted to Pṛthivī in her particular aspect of a fecundative divinity. It is said that even as this great Earth conceived the germ of all beings and has borne the vegetations, mountains and hills, and all the moving world; similarly the woman may conceive and duly give birth to a son.[195]

The Earth often forms a pair with Dyauḥ, Parjanya, Agni or Prajāpati. But the reference to Dyauḥ is only in the dual compound of Dyāvāpṛthivī or its paraphrases. Parjanya the personified cloud is said to fecundate her, evidently through rains.[196] She is called the womb of Agni,[197] and Agni is sometimes her lord.[198] As Aditi, she is called the consort of the gods.[199] As she herself received the embryo of all existence, she is besought by the husband to ensure the germ of a son in his wife.[200] Prajāpati is known as her begetter.[201]

The Vedic texts often inform that the earth was won by the gods from the Asuras to whom it had originally belonged.[202] In some of the passages,[203] a boar (*Varaha*), named Emūsha, figures as the keeper of Asuras' possessions and is killed by the god Indra. The myth of killing Emūsha or a Varāha is also traceable to the *Ṛgveda*.[204] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[205] has to add on the "Killing-of-Varāha" (*Varāhavihatam*) myth as follows: 'So large was this earth in the beginning, of the size of a span. A boar, called Emūsha, raised her up, and he was her lord Prajāpati: with that mate, his heart's delight, he thus supplies and completes him.'[206] This leads us to a complete change in the nature of the myth. It is only in the above passage that we find the Varāha, who lifted the earth, to have the same name Emūsha, whom according to the other texts, Indra killed to wrest the sacrifice and the belongings of the Asuras (who are explicitly said to have possessed the earth prior to the gods). It is, however, not clear how this particular change in the details of the myth was arrived at for, in other passages, describing the cosmogonic feat of the raising of the earth by Varāha-Prajāpati this name Emūsha of the old legend is found never repeated.

The earliest mention of the legend is in the *Atharvadeva*: 'In friendly concord with the boar, the Earth opens herself for the wild swine who roams the forest.'[207] The *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*[208] identifies this Varāha with Prajāpati, and gives the details of the legend as to glorify the cosmic exploit of Prajāpati: 'This was in the beginning the waters, the ocean. In it Prajāpati becoming the wind moved. He saw her, and becoming a boar he seized her. Her, becoming Viśvakarmā, he wiped. She extended, she became the earth, and hence the earth is called, the earth ('the extended'). In her Prajāpati made the effort. He produced the gods, Vasus, Rudras and Ādityas.'[209] According to the *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā*, the god Prajāpati in the form of a boar entered the waters and by his snout according to its extent lifted up some clay (*mṛd*) that came to be this (earth).[210] The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* further introduces the motif of a cosmic lotus-leaf, floating on the primeval waters, on which the boar stretched that bit of clay which became this earth.[211] In subsequent literature, the cosmic boar is said to have thousand arms and the black colour.[212]

According to another tradition, recorded only faintly in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,[213] the goddess earth was promised by Viśvakarma to Kaśyapa ("Tortoise"). This perhaps gives an allusion to the myth of Tortoise-Prajāpati and his relationship with the earth that are clearly known only in the post-Vedic period.

Sarasvatī

Sarasvatī is already known in the *Ṛgveda* both as a Great Flood and the deity of Intelligence.[214] She is expressly identified in the Brāhmaṇas with Vāk[215] the principle of transcendental speech, and is a divinity who presides over knowledge and all spoken word. Thus the extent of her associations is very vast in later Vedic thought and religion. But it is only in a limited number of passages that some significant evidence about her personification and function is available.

In later Vedic literature Sarasvatī is at times found associated with the deities like Indra, the Aśvins, Agni, Mitra and Varuṇa, the Maruts, Vishṇu and with Prajāpati. In company with the two Aśvins she is the subject of the part of a hymn and is described as arranging the cure of Indra.[216] She, with speech, is said to have been the physician in the Healing Sacrifice given to Indra.[217] She is held responsible as to give shape to the inner body of this god.[218] It is further stated that she, as the consort of the Aśvins, bears in her womb the well-fashioned germ of Indra, whom the lord Varuṇa is begetting for glory in the waters by the rich essence of the waters.[219] She is throughout associated in a similar way with Indra, the Aśvins etc., in all the three consecutive long hymns pertaining to the Sautrāmaṇī rites.[220] In VS XX.55, Sarasvatī appears as the milch-cow with *soma*-drink as her milk. Iḍā and Bhāratī are mentioned[221] to complete the trio of goddesses with Sarasvatī.

Her character as a goddess of procreation and fertility has evidently found mention in the above section. In an Atharvanic hymn,[222] which as a promotive charm of fertility accompanied the Garbhādhāna ceremony, Sarasvatī is besought to bless the conception of a male progeny, sharing this function, in several details, with Pṛthivī, the Aśvins, Maitrāvaruṇa, Bṛhaspati, Dhātā, Vishṇu, Tvashṭā, Prajāpati, Varuṇa and Indra.

Moreover, she keeps company with Sinīvālī, a lunar goddess, also presiding over fecundity. AV XIV.2.15 is a request to her along with Sinīvālī: 'Take your stand, you are Virāj, like Vishṇu, O Sarasvatī! O Sinīvālī, let her (the bride) bear children and live in Bhaga's grace.'[223] Both are requested to place the embryo in its proper place.[224] Elsewhere the same functions are entrusted to her singly,[225] or along with Sinīvālī, Anumati, Rākā, Guṅgū and Indrāṇī.[226] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* even identifies her, as Vāk, with Sinīvālī.[227]

Sarasvatī alone grants progeny and is begged to be kind and gracious to the person praying and his children.[228] She is requested to bestow abundant wealth and household prosperity.[229] She is further invoked to soothe an infant possessed by a Jambha,[230] and is elsewhere given the duty to kill parasitic worms.[231] In a charm to secure long life and happiness, a request is also made to her to protect from the earthly mortals.[232]

In a more or less occasional manner she is found to accompany the Fathers,[233] the All Gods,[234] Vāta,[235] Savitā,[236] Bhaga,[237] Rudra,[238] Aditi,[239] the Earth,[240] Anumati,[241] and Pūshā.[242]

Her association with Pūshā appears to have been occasionally understood to be quite close. This god brings abundant nourishment (*pushṭi*)[243] and is called the lord of *pushṭis*,[244] which he is frequently stated to represent.[245] Sarasvatī also is sometimes connected with it; is *pushṭipatnī*,[246] and in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is described to take away and afterwards restore this characteristic to Śrī.[247]

Along with Vishṇu, apart from their conjoint functions in the *garbhādhāna* rituals,[248] she plays a significant role in the Saptapadī ceremony of the wedding rites. She is invoked to be gracious to the performance and Vishṇu, to lead the bride.[249]

Sarasvatī constitutes with Iḷā and Bhāratī the triad of the goddesses, often mentioned as the Three Goddesses (*tisro devīḥ*).[250] Their collective function is to bless with ample shelter and all success.[251]

Sometimes they are mentioned by calling them as "Three Sarasvatīs",[252] or "Three Bhāratīs".[253] It is still interesting to read in the *Maitrāyaṇī* and *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitās* that Vāk herself is the Three Goddesses.[254] The goddess Iḷā (or now Iḍā also) is lauded in one hymn of a single stanza: 'May Iḍā with her statute dwell beside us, she in whose place the pious purge, cleanse them. She, mighty, Soma-decked, butter-footed, meet for All-Gods, has come to aid our worship.'[255] All the details of this description are, however, traceable to the *Ṛgveda*.[256] Certain texts now identify her with this world or the earth.[257] But her identity with a cow is always remembered.[258] In general, she is spoken of to be one with cattle.[259] Possibly the basic trait that underlies her personification is the nourishment received from cows. The nature of Bhāratī's deification is somewhat obscure. She might have been a goddess representing the earth, but only in a restricted sense, i.e. the earth belonging to the Bharata race or people. According to one view,[260] her just another name is Mahī, which replaces the former in such passages as RV I.13.9 and V.5.8. This equation is, however, liable to be questioned; or one is to believe the use of *mahī* only as an adjective in RV I.142.9, IX.5.8, AV V.27.9, and VS 28.8.

It is worthy of attention that in some passages the Three Goddesses are connected with Indra as his consorts.[261] They are also said to prepare the *soma*-drink for him.[262] Elsewhere this trio of goddesses is implicitly described to heighten the strength of their lord Indra.[263] It is stated that Bhāratī touched the heaven, Sarasvatī the sacrifice with Rudra, and Iḍā, enriched with wealth, the homesteads of the folk.[264]

This regular triad of the above goddesses does not appear to have been accorded favour in later times except in the sections that repeat the ancient texts in the ritualistic tradition. Sarasvatī doubtless dominates this goddess group as early as the *Ṛgveda*. With the immense increase in her personal functions and status, being identified with universal Vāk, Sarasvatī appears to have gradually incorporated the entities of her associate goddesses in her own personality as the presiding divinity of learning and all connected motifs. Thus we find the notion of a part merger of the other two goddesses with Sarasvatī, or Vāk, being occasionally suggested in the texts: Speech verily is the Three Goddesses.[265]

That Sarasvatī herself represented simultaneously a great stream of that name and the personified speech is alluded to in the following myth given in the *Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa*: 'Prajāpati emitted the Word and it pervaded this whole (universe). It rose upwards as a continuous stream of water.'[266] But, in general, her aspect as a river seems to have been gradually overshadowed by the other of a divinity of speech. Sarasvatī is quite often identified as Vāk in the Brāhmaṇa texts.[267] Further it is interesting to note that Vāk is said to be the controller of Sarasvatī in the *Yajurveda*.[268]

Sarasvatī as identified with Vāk is said to have assisted Varuṇa in getting back his departed lustre.[269] In the Agnichayana rites the sacrificer is described to get anointed with the help of Sarasvatī-Vāk.[270] She appears as assisting the Aśvins in restoring the head of Makha ('Sacrifice').[271] With Indra and the Aśvins, she is lauded to be everything here in the creation.[272] It is with the help of Sarasvatī and Pūshan that Prajāpati is stated to have created the prajās.[273] Elsewhere the Aśvins and Sarasvatī helped even Indra by giving him the foam of water to serve as a thunderbolt in slaying Namuchi.[274] Sometimes she is mentioned to be identical with Sinīvālī.[275] An ewe or ram being sacred to her is offered in the sacrifice.[276] Particularly noteworthy is her connection[277] with the rainy season and autumn.[278] In one section of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* we find Vāk as given away by the gods in exchange for *soma* to the Gandharvas.[279] She was coveted by the gods and the Gandharvas alike. She is identified in the text with the *Soma*-cow, given as price for the divine drink, and is addressed as Intelligence and Dakshiṇā, and, being supreme, as Aditi, the double-headed.[280] Elsewhere we are told how the gods won Vāk with the help of Yajña and by obscuring her in fire kept her away from the Asuras.[281] It is further said that the Sacrifice lusted after Vāk and from their union Indra was brought forth.[282] But in another interesting legend she is said to have turned into a lioness when in preference to her the sun was accepted as the sacrificial fee.[283] At one place she is regarded as Prajāpati's greatness (*mahimā*) departed from him when he had created Agni and the gods.[284]

In later mythology Sarasvatī is associated with Brahmā as his wife and presid over Intelligence and Knowledge. However, we have no explicit reference to the particular god Brahmā as serving Sarasvatī's consort in the Vedic period. But the rudiments of this myth can be seen in the relationship of Vāk with Prajāpati.

As it is described in the *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā*: 'Prajāpati at the beginning was alone this (universe); Vāk was his second. They both united. She conceived, and (then) went away from him. She produced (all) these generations and entered again into Prajāpati.[285] In other texts, Prajāpati's illicit lust for his daughter, who is said to be either Sky or Dawn, is also mentioned.[286] It appears that both such legends combined to give rise to a myth, according to which Prajāpati had Vāk, who is identical to Sarasvatī, first as his daughter and then as wife for the sake of procreating life.[287]

An indirect mention of the above myth is also made in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* where it is stated that Prajāpati transforming himself into Vāk became all this (world).[288] Thus we have such express equations as given in the Brāhmaṇas: 'Vāk is Prajāpati';[289] 'Prajāpati is the lord of Vāk'.[290]

According to Macdonell[291] and other scholars[292] the identification of Prajāpati with Brahmā is known only in the Sūtras.[293] By this period the relationship of Prajāpati-Brahmā with Vāk-Sarasvatī also appears to have been well understood.

In the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* Prajāpati is found equated with Savitā.[294] Even earlier Prajāpati was identified as the sun.[295] Thus it becomes significant to find *Sāvitrī*[296] as yet another name of Vāk in the Brāhmaṇa texts.[297]

The transcendental aspect of Vāk as a great principle of creation and universal existence has been mystically stated in a section of the *Jaiminīya Upanishad Brāhmaṇa*[298] that seems to epitomise all Vedic thoughts or speculations expressed about it. According to the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* the famous stanza of the *Ṛgveda*, I.164.41 is a laudation to Vāk.[299] An analysis of this Ṛgvedic stanza as given in the above Upanishad[300] also indicated the divinity as *Kāmadughā*, the milch-cow of desires.[301]

In the *Nighaṇṭu* we have an interesting list of the following words used as synonyms of Vāk in Vedic literature: Iḍā, Gau, Gaurī, Bhāratī, Menā, Sūryā, Sarasvatī, Dhenā, Nanā, Kaśā, Mahī, Aditi, Śachī, Nau, Dhenu, Suparṇī, etc.[302]

On some of these words we can have certain Brāhmaṇa texts shedding more light. For example, Vāk is said to be the same as Suparṇī-Māyā in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.[303] For Vāk, the expression *dhenu* (i.e. cow) occurs as early as the *Ṛgveda*.[304] Curiously enough, *dhenā* as a name of Vāk seems to be hinted similarly in the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*,[305] where she is called the mistress of Bṛhaspati, same as Vāchaspati.[306] For *kaśā* we may refer to *madhukaśā*, treated earlier.[307] *Nanā* of this list has been connected by some scholars with the Iranian goddess Nanā.[308]

Śrī and Lakshmī

As distinct goddesses, Śrī and Lakshmī are regarded to occur, at the earliest, in the *Vajasaneyi Saṁhitā*, where they are called the consorts of Purusha.[309] But nothing more is known about them from this text. It is only in the *Śatapatha*[310] and other Brāhmaṇas[311] that we find the personification of Śrī fully defined and allotted important place in the pantheon.

We may note here at the outset that the two names *śrī* and *lakshmī* are nowhere found in significant collocation of each other, or identified together, in the Saṁhitā and Brāhmaṇa texts excepting the above mentioned *Yajurveda* passage and its obvious repetitions. It is only in the Upanishads that Śrī and Lakshmī, the two originally distinct deities, tended to merge with each other;[312] they gradually became synonymous and their worship fully syncretised as is clear from the *Śrīsūkta*.[313] Besides this, another fact worth consideration is their early association, if any, with Vishṇu, who in later religion is Śrī-Lakshmī's regular consort. Further Śrī, as opposed to Lakshmī, finds more attention in Vedic literature both when used only as a common noun or as a goddess. It is almost strange that Śrī and Lakshmī are never assimilated with each other in the Brāhmaṇa texts, which are more than often express in identifying two objects or notions of a like nature.

A view has been expressed by Gerda Hartmann[314] in her study[315] on the goddess Lakshmī regarding her as a pre-Aryan goddess of fertility. According to her the several phenomena and functions related to Śrī-Lakshmī's character, cult, mythology and iconography show a variety of traits characteristic of deities concerned with fertility and prosperity in general.[316]

But the goddess Śrī does not appear to be a concept which can be even as old as the *Ṛgveda*. This opinion finds support from the fact that a full hymn to Śrī came to be added to the fifth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda*, as part of its *Khila* ("supplement"), apparently at a later date[317] when the personified goddess Śrī had already been well defined and widely celebrated.

The *Ṛgveda* is generally believed to know no goddess by the name Śrī or Lakshmī. In origin, *śrī* was basically an abstract quality or condition, connected vaguely in its significance to all sorts of concepts of human welfare and coveted possessions, like well-being, fortune, prosperity, abundance, happiness, bliss, grace, radiance, splendour, beauty, etc. The occurrences of the word *śrī* in the *Ṛgveda* as regards their meanings and connotations have been discussed by Oldenberg[318] and Gonda[319] according to the context and the expressions relative to it. We may treat here only a few cases that probably shed some sidelight on certain specific aspects of the deified Śrī of later tradition.

Here it is worth noting that the locution *śrī* appears in the *Ṛgveda* at many occasions as indicating a (divine) quality, faculty or "attribute",[320] mentioned for Agni, the Maruts, Rudra, Pūshan and Ushā; possibly also for Indra and Soma. For example, (1) "Thine (Agni's) glories are like lightnings of the rainy cloud."[321] (2) "This Agni is the lord with all glories among the gods."[322] (3) "Agni putting on his *śrī*."[323] (4) "All *śrī* is moulded on your (Maruts') bodies."[324] (5) "Thou (Rudra) art born as chief-of-all by *śrī*."[325] (6) "Thou art high above mankind and in *śrī* equal to the Gods, O Pūshan, . . ."[326] (7) "The radiant Dawns have risen up for glory, . . ."[327] (8) "Thou, Indra, waxest above all *śrīs*."[328] (9) "In him (Indra) all *śrīs* rest."[329] (10) "For *śrī* the Seven Mothers taught him (Soma) even at his birth."[330]

From some of the above passages it is further suggested that a belief in '*viśvā-śrī*', 'all *śrī*' or universal aspect of *śrī*, had already been touched upon by the Ṛgvedic poets. It is not difficult to understand that this all-encompassing aspect of *śrī*, along with the common usage of the term in a variety of connected meanings, came, at a second stage, in a natural corollary, to be abstracted into a goddess, the "she of *śrī*".

As a personified being Śrī first appears in the *Yajurveda*. She is mentioned, along with Lakshmī, as the wife of the Cosmic Purusha, who is in the sun.[331] But nowhere else the word *śrī* appears to signify that goddess in this Veda. However, in the *Atharvaveda*, the goddess Śrī, apart Lakshmī, does not find any mention. This may not have been without some particular significance.[332]

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* provides specific evidence for knowing the status of goddess Śrī in later Vedic pantheon. The text in ŚB 11.4.3.1-18 is of utmost importance, the main information from which may be summarised as follows:[333] From Prajāpati, worn out and heated, Śrī came forth and stood there resplendent (*dīpyamānā*), shining (*bhrājamānā*) and trembling (*lelāyantī*). The gods saw her and approached Prajāpati to ask permission to kill her. He suggested to them that as Śrī is a woman they should not kill her but rather take her characteristics from her. On it, the gods Agni, Soma, Varuṇa, Mitra, Indra, Bṛhaspati, Savitā, Pūshā, Sarasvatī and Tvashṭā took away from her respectively her *anna*, *rājya*, *sāmrājya*, *kshatra*, *bala*, *brahmavarchas*, *rāshṭra*, *bhaga*, *pushṭi* and *rūpa*. Now Śrī approached Prajāpati, and as advised by him she performed sacrifice to the above gods, who eventually restored her ten above things. Agni the lord of food gave her back her food, Soma her royal power, Varuṇa her sovereignty, Mitra her *kshatra*, Indra the lord of power her power, Savitā her dominion, Pūshā the lord of wealth her wealth (*bhaga*), Sarasvatī her abundant prosperity (*pushṭi*), Tvashṭā her cattle.

This mythical narrative is instructive in several ways. As observed by Prof. Gonda, 'this passage must no doubt be understood to mean that food, power, kingship, prosperity etc. are Śrī's spheres, the phenomena in which, and through which, her presence and activity manifest themselves, and to make it clear that she is only able to perform her functions through the mighty influence and the co-operation of Prajāpati and the ten gods: Agni, Soma, Varuṇa, Mitra, Indra, Bṛhaspati, Savitar, Pūshan, Sarasvatī and Tvashtar.[334]

From the story as well the manner in which it is told, it is not difficult to see, besides other facts, how Śrī, a recent personification, was being recognised in the pantheon. Here she is accepted as the daughter of Prajāpati. The ten major deities of rank, first being envious of her, take away her various qualities. But as she invoked them through due sacrifice they were pleased to bestow upon her those particular "things".

This explicitly indicates exaltation in Śrī's rank through the virtual sanction by the mighty gods. It is further interesting to find the position altogether changed in the *Jaiminīya Upanishad Brāhmaṇa*,[335] where each one of the six great gods, who disputed regarding their pre-eminence (*śraishṭhya*), is said to have regarded himself to be the *śreshṭhya*, and wished that others should take and revere him as *śrī*.[336] From this can be well gleaned that now Śrī had assumed an eminent position and become an exemplar or standard of distinction. The same motif seems to have been alluded to in the earlier texts also. For example, the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*[337] says that he who goes to (or worships, *upāste*) Śrī becomes the best in his region and even the kings pay homage to him. Similar may have been the motif in ŚB 14.1.1.3, where the gods are said to have wished to attain *śrī*.[338] In ŚB 14.9.3.8 she is put on a par with Agni, Soma, Tejas, Lakshmī, Savitā, Sarasvatī, Prajāpati and Viśvedevas. In some Brāhmaṇa texts Śrī is occasionally identified with the Earth,[339] with Virāj,[340] Soma,[341] the gods,[342] and with food[343] and cattle,[344] etc. The wives are considered to be a form of Śrī.[345] A particular *sāma*-ceremony is mentioned under the name *Śrī-sava*, that leads to prosperity and kingship.[346]

As noted above,[347] Śrī in the Brāhmaṇa texts is never identified with Lakshmī. Apparently, they were in origin two distinct entities, with their individual aspects referring to different, rather opposite, beliefs or phenomena. The word *śrī* in its initial occurrence in the *Ṛgveda* can hardly be taken as representing a personification, and thus, cannot be regarded a divinity of pre-Aryan origin.[348] But the case is probably different as regards Lakshmī.

The phrase '*bhadrā-lakshmī*' once occurs in the tenth book of the *Ṛgveda*, where that is said to be contained in (*nihita*, or imprinted upon) the *vāk* of the wise, who like men sieving corn-flour with a cribble, have created this *vāk* by the mind (-power).[349] We cannot accept the interpretation usually given by scholars of this text. Here the expression *bhadrā-lakshmī* does not simply convey an 'auspicious mark', but a phenomenon or entity that the wise men imposed on or made to stay in their speech through the power of their mind. A mark or sign has apparently no relevance with the spoken word (*vāk*).

From the *Atharvaveda* we have more evidence about Lakshmī as a personified being. AV I.18 is of particular importance. It is 'a charm to avert evil spirits of misfortune and wickedness, to remove ill-omened Lakshmīs and to secure prosperity'.[350] As observed by Prof. Gonda, 'AV I.18 is intended to drive away a *lakshmī* which is at the same time an *arātī*: a kind of evil spirit frustrating good intentions and disturbing happiness; it is likewise conceived as a demoniac being "antelope-footed, bull-toothed". . .'[351] In verse 2, the goddess Anumati, whom the gods created for happiness is asked to drive her (i.e. evil Lakshmī) away from the person praying. Similarly, AV VII.115.1-4 is also a charm for the removal of Evil (*Pāpī-*) Lakshmī and the acquisition of Auspicious (*Puṇyā-*) Lakshmī. Its stanza 3 informs that one and a hundred Lakshmīs are born with a mortal's body at his birth. Of them the *pāpishṭhā* (=most unlucky) ones are to be driven away from the person and the *śivā* (=auspicious) ones, to be held fast for him.

The two distinct aspects of Lakshmī are here doubtless mentioned, i.e., the Good and the Foul, or we may render the terms as the Lucky and the Unlucky. Evidently, we also find here a belief in the multiple Lakshmī goddesses similar to that in the hundred Rudra gods.[352] A tendency to refer numerous kindred spirits of a like nature to one class is seen at work in several cases.[353] In this light the words *lalāmī*, *arātī*, *araṇi*,[354] *ṛshyapadī*, *vrishadatī*, *goshedhā*, *vidhamā* and *vilīḍhī*[355] may be regarded as several names[356] of the female fiendish beings, who had come to array about Lakshmī for she, being pre-eminent amongst them, was considered their leading genius. In course of time all those fiendish females came to get merged in the personality of Lakshmī, a goddess now widely celebrated in rank and popular sanction. That from the beginning, as far as our information goes presently, there had been a belief in good and evil Lakshmīs, is doubtless shown by a variety of expressions used in recurrent opposition to each other: *bhadrā-*,[357] *puṇyā-*,[358] *śivā-*[359] and only *lakshmī*[360] for the former aspect, and *pāpī*,[361] *pāpishṭhā*,[362] *ghorā*,[363] and *alakshmī*[364] for the latter. But the auspicious aspect of Lakshmī seems to gain ascendency in the subsequent stage and indeed it was the favouring Lakshmī to be propitiated, who simultaneously presided over both her good and evil natures or manifestations.

Further on in the tradition the auspicious nature of Lakshmī combined with that of Śrī when both came to be assimilated together. But this identification of the originally two separate goddesses does not appear to have been arrived at much before the period of the Vedāṅgas. Unfortunately, the scarcity of evidence in Brāhmaṇa literature with regard to the two goddesses does not allow to probe further in the matter. But it is not difficult to guess a cult tendency at work that brought them close to each other. Besides the well-known text in the *Yajurveda*, where Śrī and Lakshmī are stated to be the wives of Purusha,[365] we have in all only two or three early passages mentioning them in collocation. One recension (Mādhyandina) of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[366] has both the goddesses included side by side in the list of deities, offered oblation in the ceremony for the attainment of a great wish. Similarly both the words occur, but with no direct connection with each other in one and the same hymn of the *Atharvaveda*.[367] In the *Sāmavidhāna Brāhmaṇa*,[368] which is in fact a late Brāhmaṇa text, both of them (but Alakshmī not Lakshmī) appear in concurrence in two connected performances for obtaining prosperity.

However, these passages shed no light on the identification of the two goddesses which is arrived at only in the *Śrīsūkta*, a hymn glorifying Śrī, and appended as a *Khila* to the fifth book of the *Ṛgveda*. In this hymn the cult of Śrī (-Lakshmī) appears to have found its popular sanction. In general the main verses are ascribable to the Vedic period both from style and the choice of diction.[369] Its later Vedic antiquity is also confirmed by the fact that some of its stanzas were adopted in the Gṛhyasūtras with only slight variations,[370] and that Śaunaka the author of the *Bṛhaddevatā*[371] and the *Ṛgvidhāna*[372] knew it.[373] There can hardly be two opinions regarding the extremely valuable information it offers for the Śrī-Lakshmī worship in the period under study. In its present form the first fifteen stanzas only can be regarded to be of late Vedic antiquity for in verse 16 it is explicitly called a hymn comprising fifteen stanzas,[374] which are prescribed to be properly recited by a person who wishes to attain prosperity (*śrīkāma*).

The main evidence given by this part of the hymn may be analysed as follows:

(1) Śrī and Lakshmī are identified as two names of a single divinity.

(2) Her antithesis is called Alakshmī,[375] also Jyeshṭhā Alakshmī;[376] to be done away with her the worshipper takes resort for aid and protection to the goddess Śrī. Jyeshṭhā Alakshmī is herself the hunger, thirst and impurity, along with *abhūti* and *asamṛddhi*.[377] She is said to have two aspects, the internal (*antarā*) and the external (*bāhya*).[378]

(3) She is called the mother-goddess Śrī (*devīṁ mātaraṁ śrīyam*),[379] and the supreme deity of all creatures (*'īsvari sarvabhūtānām'*),[380] invulnerable (*durdharshā*)[381] and revered by the gods (*devajushṭā*).[382]

(4) Her bodily form is described as shining brightly (*jvalantī*), refulgent (*prabhāsā*),[383] in outward appearance being like that of gold (*hiraṇyavarṇā*), the lotus (*padmavarṇā*) or the sun (*ādityavarṇā*). She is *hiraṇyayī* ("golden") and decked with lotus-garland (*padmamālinī*) and gold necklace (*hemamālinī*).[384]

(5) Her primary symbol is the lotus; she is called *Padminī*[385] ("possessing the lotus"), and similarly *Pushkariṇī*.[386] The lotus is her seat (*padme sthitā*); her complexion resembles that of the lotus (*padmavarṇā*)[387] and she wears a lotus garland.

(6) Her particular association with gold is emphasised by several expressions: *hiraṇyavarṇā*, *hiraṇmayī*,[388] *hiraṇyaprākārā*,[389] *hemamālinī*,[390] and also *suvarṇarajatasraj*,[391] *suvarṇa*.[392] Among other things she is requested to give gold. The word *hiraṇyaprākārā* would signify her 'to have the form of gold', or as it has been suggested by V.S. Agrawala, 'encircled by a rampart of gold', which by implication refers to the symbology of her *Chakra* or Śrīyantra.[393] However, the *Ṛgvidhāna* gives a series of rites during which the goddess is invited to come into a lotus or into gold.[394] This may possibly suggest that, in ritualistic implications, as gold was her "form", she was believed to come symbolically on a piece of this metal during the solemn performances. Do we have here a reference to the practice of having her representation on a gold plaque or foil?[395]

(7) It is said that the goddess is delighted by the sound of trumpeting

elephants (*hastinādapramodinī*). In the iconography of her Gajalakshmī or *abhisheka* form an elephant is shown on either side as pouring water on her head. However, in Vedic literature we hardly get any reference to this bearing, except what we have here. According to Prof. V.S. Agrawala the phrase *ārdrā* may also have an allusion to this significant trait of Lakshmī's iconography; particularly in stanza 13, wherein we have the expression '*ārdrāṁ* (*yaḥ* ?) *kariṇīm*': "besprinkled by the elephants".[396]

(8) She is thrice addressed as *chandrā*[397] "like the moon", and once as *sūryā*[398] "like the sun". The former expression probably associates her with the lunar goddesses.

(9) The *bilva* is her tree,[399] of which the fruits are said to be particularly efficacious in driving away Alakshmī.

(10) The goddess is called *ārdrā*[400] ("moist") and *Karishiṇī*,[401] i.e. who abounds in dung. Her folk aspect as the presiding goddess of agricultural prosperity is evident from such epithets. That her very presence (i.e. prosperity) can be known from the typical odour in the area is indicated by the epithet *gandhadvārā*.[402] Since from *kardama*, i.e. fertile mud or mire, all creatures derived their origin[403] and the waters have created all moisture,[404] both *kardama* and *chiklīta* ("wet",[405] i.e. moistened ground or field)[406] are asked to make the goddess stay in the house of the worshipper.

(11) She is begged to give cows, food and prosperity, also renown, the fulfilment of all desires, and the truthfulness of speech, etc.—more or less corresponding to the negative qualities mentioned with Alakshmī.[407]

(12) Jātavedas Agni is repeatedly asked[408] to make the goddess come to the votary. The epithet *anapagāminī* doubtless reflects the fleet (*chañchalā*) or fickle aspect of the goddess, who thus led by Agni is believed will be stable for the devotee.[409]

That Śrī-Lakshmī originally associated with agriculture and fertility is also known from other passages. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[410] significantly states that one who has attained Śrī (or prosperity) is known as *purīshya*, i.e. having dung manure. This significantly compares the belief of her staying in mire (*kardama*) and wet soil (*chiklīta*).[411] Further, we read in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā*: 'It is the cow-pen which is called Lakshmī.'[412] Her equation with food and cattle is quite often suggested in the Brāhmaṇa texts.[413] The wives are similarly stated to be a form of the goddess.[414] Prof. V.S. Agrawala has interpreted the Śrīsūkta in the light of available art evidence from the early historic period, particularly that of the ring-stones and discs, discovered from a number of ancient sites in northern India[415] and generally ascribed to the Maurya-Śuṅga period. As is observed by him, "All the different characteristics found on the discs are included in the description, which certainly formed part of folk-lore poetry . . . Lotus is her symbol as her seat (*padme sthitā*), as the centre of her disc (*padma-nemi*), as its encircling garland (*padmamālinī, pushkariṇi*)."[416] He also explains the expression '*yā antarā yāścha bāhyā*' as the inner and the outer regions or concentric zones of the ring-stone *chakras*,[417] in some cases depicting identical nude goddesses or their symbols.

Prof. Gonda has discussed Agni's particular association with the goddess as emphasised in the Śrīsūkta and also known from other texts.[418] He seems to have suggested a possible line of consideration, according to which Śrī came to be associated with Purusha as his consort (VS XXXI.22) through the particular trait of Agni's possession of *śrī*, known in the Brāhmaṇas, and the identity of one of Agni's forms in the sun with Purusha, who is Prajāpati and appears in the visible phenomenon of the sun.[419] But this does not appear to suggest a direct process at work in evolving the particular myth. We may here touch upon a different line of consideration.

The association of Purusha (Prajāpati) and Virāj is, however, initially found in the *Ṛgveda*[420] and maintained throughout the subsequent tradition. Virāj as a female principle is often identified, more than any other concept, with Śrī in the Brāhmaṇa texts.[421] Thus, knowing Virāj and Śrī to be identical, it was not difficult to arrive at two distinct, though mythically attendant upon each other, notions, approving Śrī-Virāj as the wife of cosmic Purusha[422] and also his daughter in his aspect of Prajāpati.[423] In later mythology when Purusha-Prajāpati-Nārāyaṇa came to be assimilated with Vishṇu, Śrī was conveniently described as Vishṇu's consort.[424] Even as early as the *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā*, Virāj is called the wife of Vishṇu, *vishṇupatnī*,[425] an epithet otherwise given in early Vedas to Sinīvālī and Aditi.

Hrī

Of Śrī and Lakshmī, the two consorts of Purusha (in VS XXXI.22), Lakshmī is sometimes replaced by Hrī, as in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*.[426] In Vedic texts, Hrī, Modesty, is nothing more than an abstraction of that quality and the word usually occurs in a list of such other abstract characteristics.[427] But when personified, a porcupine (*śalyaka*) was sacred to her according to the *Yajurveda*.[428] In the Gṛhyasūtras she also finds mention along with others to be offered oblations; e.g., in the *Shashṭhī-kalpa* ceremony both Śrī and Hrī together are invoked,[429] the other names being Shashṭhī, Lakshmī, Upalakshmī, Nandā, Haridrā, Samṛddhi, Jayā and Kāmā. But she as a folk goddess was held in much popular esteem and associated with Śrī is made evident from a long Buddhist Jātaka.[430]

Pushṭi

The *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* gives the equation of Vāk, Sinīvālī and Pushṭi.[431] Elsewhere, Sarasvatī is stated to be Pushṭi and the "mistress of *pushṭi*" (*pushṭipatnī*).[432] Literally the word signifies 'abundant nourishment', 'plentiful nutriment', 'prosperity', etc. The several Brāhmaṇa texts also identify Pūshā with Pushṭi.[433] But from such expressions we hardly have any suggestion to a personification of this notion. However, in post-Vedic period Pushṭi as a deified entity is one of the consorts of Dharma.[434] As a goddess name Pushṭi possibly first occurs in the *Mānava Gṛhyasūtra*.[435]

Bhūti

Bhūti, 'Thriving', 'Prosperity', is invoked in the *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra*[436] along with Śrī, Bhūmi, Sampatti etc. Earlier, in the *Atharvaveda* *śrī* and *bhūti* appear as connected notions of prosperity and well-being.[437] However, in the *Yajurveda*,[438] homage is paid to Bhūti, who effects the freedom from the bonds of Nirṛti. Commenting on it, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* says: "With 'Homage to (the goddess of) prosperity who hath done this!' they rise, for it was with a view to prosperity that the gods at first performed this rite, and to that (goddess) they then rendered homage; and for prosperity indeed this (Sacrificer) now performs this rite, and to that (goddess) he now renders homage."[439]

Subhadrā

In the rites of the Aśvamedha ceremony the sacrificed horse is to sleep with a woman Subhadrikā who dwells in Kāmpīla.[440] The particular rite of lying down with the dead horse, or with its member, was looked upon as ensuring fertility of a woman. According to Weber the Subhadrā living in Kāmpīla is said by the chief queen to be her substitute.[441] But this passage may have a reference to a goddess Subhadrikā of the Kāmpīla region. At least in later tradition that seems to have given rise to a divinity of this name or only Subhadrā. In the *Mantra Brāhmaṇa*[442] a Subhadrā probably finds mention along with Sinīvālī, Pṛthushṭakā, Pathyā and Revatī. Like other divinities addressed here she also appears to have been a goddess connected with fertility.

Pathyā

The personification of auspicious or rich path as *Pathyā Svasti* appears as early as the *Ṛgveda*,[443] and is besought, along with Mitra, Varuṇa, Indra, Agni and Aditi, to make the votary prosper. In the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*[444] Pathyā is regarded as the wife of Pusha, who is often mentioned as the guardian of roads. Elsewhere this Pathyā Svasti seems to be equated with Vāk or Speech.[445] As the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* says: 'Through Pathyā Svasti they recognised the northern region . . .; for she (Pathyā Svasti) is in reality Speech, and through her they recognised the northern region, and to her belongs the northern region.'[446] According to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, for it follows Pathyā, who is earlier identified with Aditi.[447] She appears to have been considered a goddess of bounteous paths and welfare. She is invoked in company of Sinīvālī, Revatī, Subhadrā, etc.[448]

Śraddhā

The *Ṛgveda* has a short hymn in which the deified Faith, Śraddhā, is invoked.[449] In the Brāhmaṇa texts Śraddhā is described to be the daughter of Sūrya,[450] or of Prajāpati.[451] In the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*[452] she is stated to be the mother of Kāma. According to the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* Śraddhā is the queen of the gods.[453] In the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* she is specified as the consort of Mitra.[454] Further the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*[455] glorifies the goddess Śraddhā in a pantheistic manner: ". . . the goddess Śraddhā, the first-born of *ṛta*, the protectress of all, the firm support of the whole world, we worship her, Śraddhā, with an oblation; she must destine for us an immortal world, the Lady, the goddess, the ruler of the creation."[456]

The *Atharvaveda* describing the Ekavrātya as the supreme being of the universe states that in the eastern quarter Śraddhā is his Puṁśchalī and Mitra is his Māgadha.[457] However, this Puṁśchalī is also said to be one of the victims at the Purushamedha sacrifice enumerated in the *Yajurveda*.[458] According to D.R. Bhandarkar,[459] followed by A.P. Karamarkar,[460] the Puṁśchalī associated with Ekavrātya refers to the nude images of the mother-goddess from Harappan sites. But this view can hardly be substantiated by any positive evidence and is more or less a mere conjecture on the part of the above scholars. The word *puṁśchalī* or *puṁśchalū* occurs in several passages of the Brāhmaṇas[461] as meaning a harlot or courtesan.

Further, the word *strī* occurring in a Ṛgvedic verse (VII.104.21), saying that Indra slays the Yātudhanas and the female joying and triumphing in her *māyā*, has been connected by A.P. Karamarkar with Puṁśchalī associated with the Ekavrātya Being in the *Atharvaveda*. In his words, "Moreover, it is of great importance that the word '*Strī*' used in this passage seems to be the same as Puṁśchalī used in connection with the Ekavrātya or Śiva in the *Atharvaveda*. The explanation of the fact why such a word meaning a harlot is used, we may say that, it is partly due to the sheer ignorance of the Vedic Aryans, and partly to their hatred towards this cult of their aliens."[462] But it is certainly very difficult to subscribe to this opinion for we do not know from any quarter that the terms Puṁśchalī and Strī referred specifically to the non-Aryan cult of the mother-goddess.

Sītā

Sītā or the deified furrow appears to have received particular worship as the divinity presiding over the fertility of fields. She is, however, not an abstract deity, but has for her personification the concrete basis of the ploughed field, or particularly the furrow. She is invoked in the *Ṛgveda*[463] to give prosperity and prolific yield of crops. Indra is associated with her and implored to press the furrow down, or 'take hold of her'.[464] As noted by A.B. Keith, "the figure of this goddess naturally has more life in the Sūtras, which deal with the operations of agriculture: she appears as the wife of Indra, which may be due to the fact that in the *Ṛgveda* (VIII.21.3) the god is once called Urvarāpati, 'lord of the ploughed field', and her existence is manifested in the four Sondergötter, the deities Sītā, Āśā, Araḍā, and Anaghā, who are to be worshipped at the furrow sacrifice, the threshing-floor sacrifice, the sowing of the crop, and the reaping and the putting the crop into the barns."[465]

The *Atharvaveda*,[466] repeating the Ṛgvedic verse IV.57.6, enjoins that the Furrow be offered molten butter and honey, in the particular ceremony performed to ensure a good crop. The elaborate rites that accompany the recitation of this hymn in the ceremony are given in the *Kauśika Sūtra*.[467] In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* the Furrow is likened with the womb. As it says: "Into the ready womb here cast ye the seed! it is for the seed that the womb, the furrow, is made; and if one casts (seed) into unploughed (ground), it is just as if one were to shed seed elsewhere than into the womb."[468]

In the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*[469] she is called Sāvitrī as the daughter of Prajāpati and apparently enjoyed a more exalted character than a simple furrow-goddess. Sāvitrī as the archetypal female principle in juxtaposition with Savitā as the male divinity has been given a great status in the *Jaiminīya Upanishad Brāhmaṇa.*[470]

A myth of Ahalyā, i.e. 'unploughed field' appears to be hinted in the Brāhmaṇa texts.[471] Indra is called the lover of Ahalyā Maitreyī. This allegory of the love affair between Indra, the rain-god, and Ahalyā, the untilled ground, may have suggested a similar connection for the ploughed or furrowed field with the rain-deity Indra. Hence we find Sītā addressed as the wife of Indra[472] in the *Gṛhyasūtras*.

The *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra* elaborates a particular sacrifice called *Sītāyajña* dedicated to the worship of Sītā, the deified furrow, or the rustic divinity presiding over husbandry in general.[473] As it is summarised by Keith, "East or north of the field on a place which is pure, and has been ploughed without injury to fruits, or in the village, a fire is kindled, and Darbha grass mixed with rice or barley, according to the season, is strewed round it: then offerings of butter are made to Indra, Sītā, the furrow, and Urvarā, the plough field, and from the food cooked in a pot to Sītā, Yāja, the personified sacrifice, Śamā, 'energy', and Bhūti, 'prosperity'. On the Kuśa grass remaining from the strewing an offering is made to the guardians of the furrow, who sit in the east with bows and quivers, in the south to those with mail, in the west to the mighty Bhūti, Bhūmi, Pārshṇī, and Śunaṁkurī, and in the north to the terrible ones. The women should also make offerings."[474]

Similarly in the *Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra*[475] are met with the details of festive offerings to be made besides the great gods like Indra, Parjanya, Aśani and Bhaga, to Sītā, Āśā, Araḍā, and Anaghā. These four deities received offerings at the furrow-sacrifice, at the thrashing floor sacrifice, at the sowing, at the reaping of the crop, and at the putting of the crop into the barn.

The *Kāṭhaka Gṛhyasūtra*[476] also prescribes the *Sītāyajña* with the offering of molten butter reciting the famous '*sītā*' verse.[477] In the *Kauśika Sūtra* a sacrifice dedicated to Sītā has been prescribed at the appearance of a bad omen, i.e. on the meeting of two ploughs in a furrow. According to the details given in the text the sacrifice included the offering of a *puroḍāśa* in the forest.[478]

Sinīvālī and other Associate Goddesses

Sinīvālī emerges out to be an important goddess of fertility mainly from the texts belonging to the *Atharvaveda.*[479] She already finds mention in four stanzas of the *Ṛgveda.*[480] She is particularly begged to grant progeny and to place, along with Sarasvatī and the Aśvins, the embryo in the womb, that is ritually consecrated to Vishṇu. We have discussed in a previous chapter[481] her specific character as a lunar divinity, who keeps company with other similar goddesses such as Kuhū, Rākā and Anumati, each of the group in fact believed to preside over a different phase of the moon.

The six goddesses invoked together in RV II.32.8 are Guṅgū, Sinīvālī, Rākā, Sarasvatī, Indrāṇī and Varuṇānī. Guṅgū is a somewhat obscure name. It again occurs only in the *Paippalāda Saṁhitā*[482] in a stanza which is more or less an adaptation of the above Ṛgvedic text and likewise invokes Sinīvālī, Anumati, Rākā, Guṅgū, Sarasvatī and Indrāṇī. According to the tradition recorded by Sāyaṇa she was just another name of Kuhū. This equation seems to be a possible one for the name Kuhū does not occur in the *Ṛgveda* and is nowhere found in juxtaposition with Guṅgū in the Vedic texts known presently.

This particular hymn in the *Paippalāda Saṁhitā* is of much value as to a study of certain prescribed rites to be performed by invoking a number of divinities in the ceremonially laying of the seed (*garbhādhāna*) for securing male progeny. In the second stanza the trio of Sinīvālī, Varuṇānī and Indrāṇī, along with Dhātā, is asked to bless with a male child.[483] In a similar[484] epithalamic charm to ensure the birth of a boy it is said that it is verily the finding of a son when the man sows the seed and the woman tends and fosters it. The three deities Prajāpati, Anumati and Sinīvālī take part in shaping a male progeny and effect the birth of a boy.

In the *Paippalāda Saṁhitā* the two goddesses Indrāṇī and Varuṇānī appear as keeping regular company with Sinīvālī. Besides the above passage, the goddesses Sinīvālī, Varuṇānī, Indrāṇī and Aditi are invoked to bless with a son in *Paipp. Saṁ.* 5.11.5.[485] Elsewhere, the trio of goddesses Indrāṇī, Varuṇānī and Sinīvālī is similarly begged to give houses having brave sons.[486] They again appear in *Paipp. Saṁ.* 20.10.10 and have the same field of action.

The close relationship of Sinīvālī with Sarasvatī in the functions of fertility and child-birth has been treated above with reference to Sarasvatī and that hardly needs to be repeated here.

According to the later Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇa texts Sinīvālī, Anumati, Kuhū, Rākā are the goddesses who presided over different phases of the moon.[487] Anumati personified the day before the full-moon night, Rākā the full-moon night, Sinīvālī the day before the new-moon night and Kuhū the new-moon night.[488] Further in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* these goddesses are identified with the metres: Anumati with Gāyatrī, Rākā with Trishṭubh, Sinīvālī with Jagatī and Kuhū with Anushṭubh.[489] To them *charu* or pap was the special offering.[490] But the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* has a very interesting section enjoining the offering to these minor deities to secure progeny.[491] As it says: "He who desires offspring should offer (the oblations to) the minor deities; the minor deities are the metres . . . He makes Dhātā first; verily he produces pairing with him, Anumati gives approval to him, Rākā gives, Sinīvālī produces, and in offspring when produced by Kuhū he places speech. These (offerings) also should he make who desires cattle; the minor deities are the metres, cattle are as it were the metres; verily by metres he produces offspring for him. He makes Dhātā first; by him he scatters, Anumati gives approval to him, Rākā gives, Sinīvālī produces, and by Kuhū he establishes offspring when produced . . . Anumati is the Gāyatrī, Rākā the Trishṭubh, Sinīvālī the Jagatī, Kuhū the Anushṭubh, Dhātā the Vashaṭ call. Rākā is the first fortnight, Kuhū the second, Sinīvālī the new moon (night), Anumati the full-moon (night), Dhātā the moon."[492]

Here the four goddesses, along with Dhātā, are given different functions in the early life of an infant; Dhātā is connected with coupling or the laying of the seed, Anumati gives the approval for the conception, Rākā gives the progeny, Sinīvālī is responsible for its production and in offspring when produced it is the duty of Kuhū to give speech.[493] It is curious that the text somewhat differs from the tradition, recorded in the other Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas, in the identification of the goddesses with the lunar phases. Here Sinīvālī is called the personification of the new-moon night, Anumati the full-moon night, while Rākā and Kuhū are believed to refer to the first and second fortnights.

According to a myth given in the *Kāṭhaka Saṅkalana*,[404] Prajāpati allotted the one *Kalā* of the moon to Sinīvālī, who having made her home dwelling in cattle, the vegetation and the herbs, came to be (known as) *amāvāsyā*, 'home dwelling', which is the characteristic of Amāvāsyā.[495] Thus in one passage of the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, Sinīvālī is identified as Amāvāsyā or the new-moon night.[496] Under this scheme Rākā is the first fortnight, Kuhū the second, Anumati the full-moon night and Dhātā the moon.[497]

Sinīvālī and Anumati are the leading goddesses of the group. The personality of Sinīvālī is even more prominent to that of her associate. Quite frequently they appear as performing various functions of the fertility goddesses. Further we find them mentioned together with Indra in the *Paippalāda Saṁhitā*[498] engaged in certain war-like duty, which is not quite clear owing to the corrupt text.

Sinīvālī is quite often celebrated in the *Atharvaveda*. In a short hymn[499] she is declared to be the consort of Vishṇu, the sister of the gods and the mistress[500] of the people. Other epithets occurring in the third stanza of the hymn include '*sahasrastukā*', having a thousand tresses, and '*indraṁ pratīchī*', facing Indra. On the strength of this important evidence, Prof. Gonda points out that besides her being considered as the wife of Vishṇu, in a particular period or a circle of worshippers, it is curious to find her mentioned as "*indraṁ . . . pratīchī*', which may be translated according to him, by "turning towards Indra".[501] It is noteworthy that the goddess is here asked to urge her lord (Vishṇu) to give bounty.[502]

Curiously enough, Sinīvālī is connected with cattle and besought to guide them to the cow-pen; besides Anumati being implored to enclose them within it.[503] In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* she is in fact identified as the cow.[504] According to the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* three heifers were to be offered to Sinīvālī in the Horse Sacrifice.[505] Similarly, the creatures to be slaughtered as to be offered to Sinīvālī in the same sacrifice are said to be the Kvayi, the Kuṭaru and the gallinule.[506]

In AV 6.11.3 she, accompanied by Anumati and Prajāpati, is besought to shape a male child in the womb of the woman being consecrated in the Puṁsavana rites.[507] Likewise she is requested to allow the bride to bear children and live in Bhaga's grace.[508] The text RV X.184.1-2 recurs many times in later Vedic literature. Being a *garbhāsthāsīḥ* it finds ritual application in the Gṛhyasūtras and is used, along with other verses, in the ceremony intended to effect male conception.[509]

It is interesting to note that in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad*,[510] the text RV X.184.2 (=AV V.25.3) is changed to the extent that in place of '*sarasvati*' it reads '*pṛthushṭake*', which, in fact, is originally an epithet of Sinīvālī.[511] Similar appears to be the case in the *Mantra Brāhmaṇa*.[512]

Of particular importance is VS XI.56 that describes the bodily ornaments of this goddess. She is given three specific items of decoration, namely *sukapardā*, *sukurīrā* and *svopaśā*. What specifically these expressions denote is difficult to ascertain. It would not be unreasonable to associate these features particularly with the coiffure of the goddess.[513] However, her epithet '*sahasrastukā*' in AV VII.46.3

probably indicates the variegated headdress of Sinīvālī. The comments by the author of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (on VS XI.56) are indeed instructive in this regard.[514] " 'Sinīvālī, the *fair-knotted* (*sukapardā*), *fair-braided* (*sukurīrā*), *fair-locked* (*svaupaśā*)',—for Sinīvālī is a woman, and that indeed the perfect form of woman, to wit, the fair-knotted, fair-braided, fair-locked: he thus makes her perfect;—'may she place the fire-pan into thy hands, O great Aditi'."[515]

In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* Vāk has been equated with Sinīvālī.[516] In this light, it is not difficult to understand how Sinīvālī gets the epithet *madhumatī* in the *Paippalāda Saṁhitā*.[517] The etymology of the word given by Yāska would connect the goddess with food and nourishment.[518] In the *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā* a sick person is mentioned to sacrifice to Sinīvālī, Anumati, Rākā, Kuhū and Dhātā.[519] It is further noteworthy that the *Paippalāda Saṁhitā* associates this goddess with agriculture and *inter alia* calls her *jyeshṭhī*[520] or *jyeshṭhā*,[521] an epithet which usually belongs to Lakshmī.[522]

Anumati, literally Favour, or Divine Grace, has found mention twice in the *Ṛgveda*, and there she is requested to be gracious and to grant long life.[523] As remarked by Keith, "In the Yajurveda and in the Atharvaveda she appears as a goddess who presides over propagation and favours love, and in the Sūtras she is clearly understood as connected with the moon, denoting the day before full moon. It is difficult to suppose that this view of the deity is anything but a later conception, for there is nothing to support it in the early mention of the deity."[524] Apparently Anumati was a later inclusion in the *original trio* of lunar goddesses, namely Sinīvālī, Rākā and Kuhū.[525] She is, however, never mentioned along with them in the *Ṛgveda*. To us she appears to be in origin an abstraction propitiated to counteract the evil influences of Nirṛti. At least from the context in RV X.59. 1-10, this appears to be the belief at the back of invoking a group of divinities, including Soma, Asunīti, Anumati, Heaven and Earth, against the evil influences of Nirṛti. The same motif seems to be inherent in the details of the Rājasūya sacrifice, of which the preliminary rites, beginning on the 1st Phālguna, essentially include the offerings to Anumati and to Nirṛti.[526] However, we find support to this supposition from a passage in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā*,[527] which clearly bears out the rudimentary contradistinction of Nirṛti and Anumati. Similarly, Anumati is requested to drive away ill fortunes of the Lakshmī class in the *Atharvaveda*.[528] It is stated here that she was created by the gods for the happiness of worshipping folk.[529] The same fact may be noted in another hymn, which is a charm to deprecate Arātī, who is the malignity personified and belongs to the class of Nirṛti goddesses.[530] Here Anumati, along with Sarasvatī and Bhaga, is invoked for help in one of the stanzas.[531]

She also appears, together with Ākūti or Intention, as presiding over love affairs, and is besought to send forth the love charms by a woman to the lover.[532] Elsewhere she is requested to approve the sacrifice and to grant happiness, strength, energy and long life.[533] Her connection with fecundity is apparent from several passages in the *Atharvaveda*. In company with Prajāpati and Sinīvālī, she is said to shape and effect the birth of a male child.[534] A short hymn entirely given to her is instructive as regards her functions in general.[535] She is besought to approve and accept the sacrifice, to grant health, happiness and children etc. She is lauded to have become all that stands, walks and moves.[536] She is also prayed to bestow riches.[537]

To her a cake on eight potsherds was offered as sacrificial food in the Rājasūya ceremony.[538] In the Horse sacrifice the creatures to be slaughtered for her offering are a Pidva, an antelope and a cock.[539] The fee accompanying her offering in the Rājasūya is described to be a cow,[540] or a garment.[541]

According to A.B. Keith, possibly a verse in the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*[542] seems to refer to the character of Anumati as the deity of full moon in a much less vague manner than in other early passages. His translation of it is as follows:

> 'Anumati men reverence in the quarter
> Wherein is that which shineth;
> May she in whose lap is the broad atmosphere,
> The goddess, easy to invoke, grant us protection.'[543]

But her identification as a lunar goddess is only clear from several Brāhmaṇa passages, mentioned above, which recognise the four goddesses Anumati, Rākā, Sinīvālī and Kuhū with different phases of the moon.[544]

In their characteristically symbolic expressions the Brāhmaṇa texts have also equated Anumati with the earth,[545] with the sky and the metre Gāyatrī.[546] Once she is said to be the wife of Prajāpati.[547]

In the Gṛhyasūtras, this goddess appears, along with other deities, in the lists of those who received oblations in particular rituals; e.g. the Vaiśvedeva offerings made in the fire evening and morning by the householder include one to her.[548] Similarly in the ceremony of ploughing she is to get offerings along with other deities connected with the fertility of ground.[549] Her name also occurs in the list of deities to be propitiated in the ceremony of the commencement of a term of study.[550]

In all such cases no other goddesses of the moon phases are found to be included. However, this possibly evinces the personification of Anumati as being originally quite distinct from the lunar phenomena.

As compared to her, Rākā and Kuhū are basically the divinities presiding over lunar phases. Rākā is described as 'very brilliant' and 'illustrious' in the *Ṛgveda*.[551] The two verses RV II.32.4-5 in her praise find frequent repetition in subsequent literature.[552] Her particular function is to make bounteous gifts and grant progeny, besides her work with a needle that never breaks. In accordance to her liberal character a derivation of the name *rākā* from root *rā* 'to give' has been suggested in the Brāhmaṇas.[553]

In a hymn seemingly devoted to the procreative rites the *Paippalāda Saṁhitā* makes her particular mention. One stanza gives this request: "Let Tvashṭā shape your progeny, Dhātā place your embryo, and with her needle Rākā, who is the sovereign mistress of all beings and the goddess of the world, sew (it)."[554]

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* describes her to be the sister of the gods.[555] It says: "He celebrates the wives of the gods . . . they say 'Let him celebrate Rākā first; a sister has the first drink' . . . He celebrates Rākā; Rākā is it that sews this suture in man which is in the organ. Male sons are born for him who knows thus."[556]

Similarly in the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra* it is prescribed that one who is desirous of progeny should have Rākā and Sinīvālī worshipped before Agni Gṛhapati.[557] The *Bhāradvāja Śrautasūtra* giving the ritual details of the Patnīsaṁyāja offerings mentions the invokation of Rākā with the formula: "By the sacrifice to Rākā may I become rich in offspring."[558] It is interesting to find here that different blessings are described to accrue from the worship done to Rākā, Sinīvālī and Kuhū. As it has, by the sacrifice to Sinīvālī the person is to become rich in cattle, by the sacrfice to Kuhū, in prosperity and cattle. In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* she specifically is held responsible to give progeny.[559]

Kuhū is a name that does not occur in the *Ṛgveda*. The traditional view that Guṅgū is just another name for Kuhū has been noted above.[560] The *Atharvaveda* has one hymn of two stanzas dedicated to this goddess,[561] and knows her as granting progeny and wealth. She is the beneficient goddess skilled in all her functions, the easy to invoke and the giver of good fortune and increase of wealth. She is averred to be the wife of the gods and of immortality (*devānāmamṛtasya patnī*).[562] According to the *Bhāradvāja Śrautasūtra* by worshipping her one becomes rich in prosperity and cattle.[563] She is the deity who is said to give speech to the infant when born.[564]

Apart from the above four goddesses, some other personifications of the lunar nights are also mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*. Of them *Paurṇamāsī* and Amāvāsyā are given even full hymns; but their description is more poetic than religious.[565] They appear to have been given the rank of a divinity only slightly, with no specific functions being allotted to them. They are shadowy figures possibly without any cult significance, and are to be understood as mere literary personifications of the lunar phases. It is interesting to recall that the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* regards Sinīvālī and Anumati as the presiding divinities of Amāvāsyā and Paurṇamāsī.[566] Further the same text has forbidden intercourse with one's wife on these days possibly owing to the reason that they were regarded sacred to the fertility goddesses presiding over them.[567]

Of the lunar mansions the asterism Kṛttikā, Revatī and Rohiṇī are often described as deified beings and 'mothers'. They play a significant role as goddesses in the post-Vedic pantheon. In an Atharvavedic hymn these heavenly bodies are invoked for protection and prosperity.[568] Besides the above three we have the names of Ārdrā, Punarvasū, Āśleshā, Maghā, Chitrā, Phālguni, Anurādhā, Jyeshṭhā, Bharaṇī, etc.[569] According to the *Maitrāyaṇī*[570] and *Kāṭhaka*[571] *Saṁhitās* the asterisms are the daughters of Prajāpati who gave them to the king Soma.[572] Thus Rohiṇī is said to be the wife of the moon.[573] Similarly the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* says that Prajāpati had thirty-three daughters, whom he gave to Soma, the king. Of them Soma associated with Rohiṇī; they returned in anger to Prajāpati, who asked Soma to treat them equally. But again he associated with Rohiṇī alone and illness seized him.[574] It is only in the later period that they are specifically described as the wives of the moon in certain legendary contexts.

Rohiṇī is sometimes the female counterpart of Rohita, and called Rohita's devoted consort.[575] The Kāśyapas and the Gandharvas are said to lead her upward and the heavenly sages, to ever watch and guard her. According to the authors of the *Vedic Index*, Rohiṇī also denoted a 'red cow' in the *Ṛgveda* and later.[576]

Revatī and Kṛttikās are said to be the neck and the shoulders respectively of the cosmic Bull-and-cow in the *Atharvaveda*.[577] From later Vedic literature Revatī indeed emerges out to be a prominent personification. She is identified with Speech,[578] Gāyatrī,[579] the Waters,[580] and her stars are called the mothers[581] and all gods.[582] She is associated with the god Pūshan[583] and all animals are said to belong to her.[584] As an epithet or adjective the word *revatī* meaning 'rich' appears to be connected both in the *Ṛgveda* and the *Atharvaveda* with Pathyā, the Way.[585] Similarly the goddess Ratri is addressed as Revatī in AV XIX.47.4. But such cases are doubtful as to the independent personification of Revatī.

The *Mantra Brāhmaṇa*[586] gives invokation to Revatī along with Subhadrā, Pathyā, and the lunar goddesses Rākā and Sinīvālī. In the Gṛhyasūtras she appears both as the name of the particular asterism and the goddess presiding over it.[587]

Kṛttikās, the Pleiades, are regarded in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* as the "mouth" or chief (*mukham*) of the lunar mansions.[588] Elsewhere they are called the head of Prajāpati.[589] They are considered of fiery nature and regularly associated with Agni, who is their deity[590] and pair.[591] They form a group of seven stars which are named in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* as Ambā, Dulā, Nitatnī, Abhrayantī, Meghayantī, Varshayantī and Chupuṇīkā.[592] These names also occur as appellations to the bricks connected with Agni in the *Taittirīya*,[593] *Maitrāyaṇī*[594] and *Kāṭhaka*[595] *Saṁhitās*. Of them Ambā is apparently a term denoting 'mother'. The *Atharvaveda* knows Nitatnī as a plant that is addressed as goddess (*devī*) and said to be the remedy for all diseases.[596] May be that it was a herb-plant thought directly or indirectly to be connected with the Kṛttikā of the same name. As remarked in the *Vedic Index* the three names—*abhrayantī*, 'forming clouds'; *meghayantī*, 'making cloudy'; *varshayantī*, 'causing rain',—apparently refer to the rainy Pleiades.[597]

The Kṛttikās are seven in number is a tradition often mentioned in the later Vedic texts.[598] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* emphasises this plurality of the Pleiades by saying that the other lunar asterisms consist of one, two, three or four stars, so that the Kṛttikās are the most numerous of asterisms: hence he thereby obtains an abundance.[599] Further it is stated in this text that the Kṛttikās originally were the wives of the Ṛkshas (Bears) or Seven Ṛshis and precluded from intercourse with their husbands for the latter rise in the north and they are in the east. And a person setting up fires under the Kṛttikās may thus be precluded from intercourse with his wife.[600]

In later religion the Kṛttikās are regarded as the "mothers" of Skanda, who is thereby named as Kārttikeya or Kṛttikāputra. The *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā* has a *Skanda-Gāyatrī*, along with nine others,[601] giving Kārttikeya as Skanda's name.[602] The epithets Kārttikeya and Kṛttikāsuta for Skanda also occur in the *Atharvapariśishṭas*.[603] However, it may be noted that the myth alluded to in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* regarding the Kṛttikās as originally the wives of the Seven Ṛshis had something to do in later mythology with the birth-legend of Skanda-Kārttikeya, in which, according to the great epic, Svāhā, the wife of Agni, had to assume the form of six of the wives, excepting Arundhatī, of the Seven Sages, to get united with her husband.[604] Moreover in the later tradition, particularly with reference to their six-headed offspring the god Skanda, the Kṛttikās are often counted as six in number.[605]

Ashṭakā, Ekāshṭakā Personifications

Besides such personified lunar phases and the asterisms, we also find a tendency to deify similarly an auspiciously held day or some significant occasion. Of them Ashṭakā (or Ekāshṭakā) and Shashṭhī are the prominent ones and often appear as personified goddesses.

In AV III.10.1-13 a goddess by the name Ashṭakā or Ekāshṭakā has been celebrated. According to the commentators this particular Eighth Day or Ekāshṭakā was the eighth day after the full moon of Māgha, and as it marked the end of the year, or the beginning of the new year, the day was held in particular reverence.[606] An Ashṭakā or this 'sole Ashṭakā' was the eighth day after the full moon is clearly shown by the *Atharvaveda.*[607] In the hymn dedicated to her praise this night is likened to a cow and addressed as the consort of the Year (*saṁvatsarasya patnī*).[608] She is asked to grant abundant happiness, children, wealth, cattle and the favour of the gods. Above all, she is lauded as the mother of Indra and Soma, and the daughter of Prajāpati.[609] She is said to have brought forth her babe, the mighty and illustrious Indra, with whom the gods could subdue their adversaries and who killed in his might the Dasyus or Asuras.[610]

The *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* tells us that the Ekāshṭakā is the wife of the year, and on this night he dwells with her.[611] In the *Mantra Brāhmaṇa* she is addressed as Night, the wife or counterpart of the year.[612] Elsewhere she is equated with this earth[613] and said to be sacred to Prajāpati.[614]

From the *Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa* we know of a tradition according to which the twelve *Ekāshṭakās* (properly *Ashṭakās*, each eighth day following a full-moon day) had come to be believed as sacred.[615] On the same lines the Gṛhyasūtras appear to enjoin more than one such day, i.e., three or even four Ashṭakās.[616] But the Ashṭakā *par excellence* or Ekāshṭakā seems to be held in special reverence and was celebrated in the month of Māgha. V.M. Apte has termed it as 'the *middle* Ashṭakā', of which the sacrifice of a cow or an animal (goat) was a distinct feature.[617] As noted by Keith, "A very odd rite is prescribed by the Mānava school (VOJ IV.211; MGS ii.9.1-3), for the evening before the last Astaka: at the cross-roads the sacrificer kills a cow, dismembers it, and divides the flesh among the passers-by."[618] It is interesting to note that in the *Anvāshṭakya* ceremony, or the rites following the Ashṭakā, the "Mothers" were offered their sacrificial share along with the Fathers, Agni and Soma, and they received particularly wine (*surā*) and the scum of boiled rice.[619]

Somewhat similar to Ashṭakā is the personification of the full-moon night of the month of Margasirsha under the name *Āgrahāyaṇī.*[620] It is in fact the full-moon day which comes in the beginning of the year, and the festival on this occasion seems to make use of some of the mantras that were recited on the Ashṭakā festivals (i.e. AV III.10.2-6; *Taitt. Saṁ.* 5.7.2.1).[621]

Rātrī the Night

More or less of the same type is the personification of Night, Rātrī, who seems to be hailed in one complete hymn as early as the *Ṛgveda.*[622] She is called the daughter of Heaven,[623] the goddess (*devī*), and the sister of Dawn. As remarked by Macdonell, "She is not conceived as the dark, but as the bright starlit night. She shines manifoldly with her eyes. Decked with all splendour, she fills the valleys and heights, driving away the darkness with light. At her approach men return home like birds to their nests. She is invoked to keep away the wolf and the thief, guiding her worshippers to safety."[624]

She seems to be lauded at least in four hymns of the *Atharvaveda*.[625] Of them the first, i.e. XIX.47, was no doubt held in particular reverence as its stanza finds repetition in the *Yajurveda*,[626] Yāska's *Nirukta*[627] and in the *Pariśishṭas* of *Ṛgveda*.[628] But in these Sūktas dedicated to the goddess Night her aspect appears to have altogether changed. As compared to the description of the 'bright starlit' Night in the *Ṛgveda*, she now appears to be a deification of the dark, black[629] Night with no lights or stars. She is addressed as '*tamasvatī*' (darksome),[630] '*ramyā*' (dark),[631] and it is said that when she spreads forth in the sky dreadful darkness comes near.[632]

She is called the goddess (*devī*), the mother (*mātā*), youthful maiden (*yoshā yuvatī*), daughter of the sky or heaven (*duhiturdivah*) and *revati* (opulent), *bhadra siva* (auspicious) etc. A repeated prayer is made to her for protection from thiefs, fiends, serpents, wolves and harmful creatures. She is begged to give all sorts of shelter to her worshipper.

In the apocryphal hymn of the *Ṛgveda*, all the detailed praises and descriptive expressions of the Atharvavedic stanzas seem to be omitted. Now she is lauded as the great goddess, with several new epithets and glorifying phrases. It is very significant that the hymn is also called *Durgāstava*.[633] Only its first twelve or thirteen verses appear to be of some considerable antiquity, and probably the first five may be roughly assigned to the late Vedic period.

Several of the epithets and names of the goddess are of particular importance, i.e. *Bhadrā*, *Bhagavatī*, *Kṛshṇā*,[634] *Śivā*[635] and *Durgā*.[636] The name Durgā is quite unique here. The expression appears to have come from certain notions connected with her personification. One of them may probably be the allusion in the *Atharvaveda* to her transporting the person praying over all difficulties (*no adya pārayati durgāṇi viśvahā*).[637] But to us another notion appears to have played a more significant part in giving birth to this expression. In the *Atharvaveda* she is the goddess who personifies fully dark night, her lightless or dark nature with no stars or moon being emphasised by the words *tamasvatī*, *ramyā*, etc. May be that at a later stage, a new epithet *Durgā* was given to her for the same reason. Presumably this appellation was suggested by the view that during this—or such a—night any movement of men and creatures was difficult. However, a change in the original implication of the term was an easy one, when Durgā as the regular name of the goddess was interpreted in the light that she was difficult of access, or that she helped in crossing over the difficult ocean of existence. But this name of the goddess is hardly met with prior to the Sūtra literature.[638]

Another short prayer to the goddess Rātrī is preserved in the *Sāmavidhāna Brāhmaṇa*,[639] which gives a *Rātrī-vrata*, a vow or worship of Rātrī, performed by those who wish no rebirth. She is celebrated by the epithets *Punarbhū* (who has recurring appearance), *Mayobhū* (delighting), *Kanyā* (virgin), *Śikhaṇḍinī* (crested), *Pāśahastā* (holds a noose in hand), *Yuvatī* (youthful), and *Kumāriṇī* (who has *kumāras*).[640] Here she seems to be identified as the great virgin mother, who is given *sikhaṇḍa*, an attribute of Rudra[641] and a *pāśa*, of Varuṇa.[642]

Shashṭhī

Of a different nature is the name Shashṭhī of a Mother-goddess known in the Gṛhyasūtras. The *Mānava Gṛhyasūtra*[643] has preserved the details of a very remarkable ceremony dedicated to this goddess. This ritual is called the *Shashṭhī-kalpa* or the 'Scripture of Shashṭhī', and was performed on the 6th day of a lunar fortnight. The goddess Shashṭhī is invoked as the auspicious, glorified and omniform divinity.[644] She is said to give riches (*dhanada*), to possess treasures (*vasumīśānā*), to grant the fulfilment of wishes of all who desire, etc. Her favour is besought to get sons, cattle, treasures, corn, and many goats, cows and ewes. She has been first identified with a number of powerful abstractions and female personifications, for example Nandā, Bhūti, Lakshmī, Ādityā, Vāk, Siddhi, Rajanī, Kāmā, Kāmapatnī, Ākṛti, Prakṛti, and Padmachāriṇī (the Lotus-footed One).[645] As remarked by Prof. Gonda, "In the subsequent stanzas the author imperceptibly proceeds to commingle Shashṭhī's individuality with that of Śrī, quoting the Śrīsūkta, concluding his recitation by a number of invokations . . ."[646] The names invoked include, besides Shashṭhī, Śrī, Hrī, Lakshmī, Upalakshmī. Nandā, Haridrā, Samṛddhi, Jayā and Kāmā. Apparently these were brought together with the view that it was the same great goddess known under different names and epithets, and in the present context was represented by Shashṭhī.

Moreover, the several goddesses occurring here seem to be all associated with fertility and children. As we know from later literature,[647] Shashṭhī was in origin the personification of the sixth day after the child-birth. This presiding genius of the particular day, called Shashṭhī, came to be regarded as the formal recipient of all those rites that were essentially performed by the mothers to ensure happy and trouble-free life of their newly born children. As a matter of fact Shashṭhī's identification with all the goddesses, presiding over child-birth and progeny and propitiated at the occasion was easily suggested.

The *Kāṭhaka Gṛhyasūtra* mentions Shashṭhī along with Kālī, Bhadrakālī and other divinities.[648] From it we may glean that like Kālī Shashṭhī was also a goddess of fierce nature, i.e. harassing children. But she was believed to be gracious and benevolent like Bhadrakālī when properly worshipped. However, from her identification with the goddess Śrī, as is evident in the *Shashṭhī-kalpa*, she had come to be a favouring goddess presiding over the welfare of new-born children. The *Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra* also gives Shashṭhī as one of the names of Śrī.[649]

In the list of names recited at the time of making *tarpaṇa* to sages, deities and others, Shashṭhī's name is found included in several of the Kalpasūtra texts,[650] and usually appears in close collocation with the epithets of Skanda, with whom she is regularly associated in the later pantheon.[651]

Nirṛti

Nirṛti is the evil genius of destruction, dissolution and misfortune. She occurs in the *Ṛgveda* as a personification presiding over death.[652] Though an abstract deity, her figure is quite prominent and well defined. She is related with Yama, the god of Death as his female associate, and causes decay, ill health, diseases, discontent and all sorts of misfortune. In one passage the four immortal Guardians of the regions are requested to rescue the person praying from the bonds of Nirṛti.[653] Another hymn ritually employed in the ceremony after the birth of a child is a charm against various diseases, curses, Varuṇa's noose and Nirṛti.[654] Elsewhere she appears to be a low-graded evil spirit causing abortion.[655] She is said to seize a person in her snare as a horse is held by the reins.[656] Her noose or snares are also mentioned elsewhere.[657]

In AV V.7.9, some allusion is made to the form of Nirṛti. She is said to be golden haired (*hiraṇyakeśī*). Here Arātī, Malignity, an inferior personification of Nirṛti's class, has been addressed by the name of Nirṛti herself, who seems to be the leading goddess of all such evil beings.[658] This hymn being devoted to the deprecation of Arātī was used as a charm to exonerate misfortune.[659] Arātī is similarly a name occurring in the class of female spirits connected with evil Lakshmī.[660]

Nirṛti is sometimes identified as sin, and as noted by Bloomfield, 'the boundary-line between sin and misfortune (*nirṛti*) is evanescent'.[661] She is said to belong to the *papman* class of divinities.[662] *Pāpma* also occurs as her epithet.[663] It is curious to find that Sleep (*svapna*) is said to be a son of Nirṛti.[664] The dove is called her envoy,[665] and another bird, *śakuni* (possibly raven or the carrion crow, being given the epithet *kṛshṇa*), is alluded to be her mouth.[666] Peculiarly enough, in the Human Sacrifice her victim is stated to be a younger brother who has married before his elder.[667] In AV VIII.4.9, the lap of Nirṛti is mentioned.

In the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā* the dove, owl and hare are described to be offered to Nirṛti.[668] Similarly the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* mentions the mule and ass for her offering.[669] In the Sūtras a Brahmachārin student being under a vow of chastity if fails in this duty is required to make an offering of an ass to the goddess Nirṛti. The peculiar details of this ritual of atonement as prescribed in the texts have been discussed by Oldenberg and Keith.[670] The latter is of opinion that "in the case of the offering of an ass to Nirṛti the aim to secure the replacement of virility by the offerer is obvious, and reduces the offering to its real character, a magic rite dignified by the introduction of the goddess and the form of sacrifice."[671]

In the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā,* dice, women and sleep as the three most evil things are said to be specifically connected with this goddess.[672] In her particular ceremonies she was offered black grain or nail pairings.[673] As noted by Keith, the sacrificial fee in such cases was a black cow with imperfect horns. In the piling of the fire altar, black bricks were built in for her.[674]

In the *Yajurveda Saṁhitās*, the formulas given for the piling of the Āhavanīya fire include some mantras in homage to Nirṛti[675] as propitiating her with the laying down of the black bricks dedicated to her.[676] She is asked to seek that person who does not make offering or sacrifice, and, curiously enough, is said to follow the path of the thief and robber.[677] Thus it seems that she was also regarded by thieves and bandits as their tutelary deity. Besides the common verses, the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* has an additional stanza, which says: "Praising Nirṛti, the goddess, like a father his son, I weary her with my words; she who knoweth all that is born, discerneth, the lady, every head."[678]

She is considered fierce and evil by nature.[679] A belief has been expressed in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā* that the half of man is verily possessed with Nirṛti and his other half is not possessed with her.[680] Or, that woman who is manly and that man who is womanly both are possessed with Nirṛti.[681] Similarly, a person who is impeded is verily possessed with Nirṛti.[682] According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, a wife without a son was believed to be possessed with Nirṛti.[683] In the royal consecration ceremony the king was to go to the house of his discarded wife, who failed to give him a son, and make there the offering to Nirṛti. The text emphasises that whatever of Nirṛti's nature is in the childless wife, that he thereby propitiates, and thus Nirṛti does not take possession of the king while he is consecrated.[684] The fee for this ritual is stated to be a black, decrepit, diseased cow, for such a one is possessed with Nirṛti.[685] In the Horse sacrifice, of the dismembered portions of the horse the bald head was the offering to Nirṛti.[686]

On some occasions Anumati seems to be treated as an antithesis of Nirṛti. In the Rājasūya ceremony the preliminary rite of Dikshā is immediately followed by offerings to both Anumati and to Nirṛti, who receives the fallen portions of the grain on a salt piece of ground in the southwesterly direction.[687] Sometimes Nirṛti is also identified with the Earth.[688] As noted by Heesterman, "Moreover, both Nirṛti and Anumati are identified with the earth, Nirṛti representing the earth's evil aspect."[689]

We can profitably refer also to a section of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* which gives a well-commented description of the preparation of the altar for Nirṛti.[690] The text gives various ritual notions and their exegetical significance understood in connection with the evil nature of Nirṛti as she was thought to be primarily represented by a number of inauspicious and baneful objects and motifs such as the darkness (*tamas*), the evil (*papman*), the embryonic covers, the signless (*alakshaṇa*), the rice-husk (*tusha*), the black (*kṛshṇa*), southwesterly quarter (*nairṛtī dik*), the soil saline by nature (*svakṛta-iriṇa*), the ground with cleft (*śvabhra-pradara*), one who neither presses Soma nor makes offering, a thief, a robber, Yama and Yamī, the metal-bond (*ayasmaya-bandha*), awfulness, a sling (*śikya*), a noose (*pāśa*), etc.

In the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, Nirṛti is described as headless (*viśīrshṇī*) and vulture-headed (*gṛdhraśīrshṇī*), her associate being an obstacle-demon with the white belly, stunted thighs and brindled stomach.[691] From an iconological point of view, this is one of the most significant Vedic passages about Nirṛti wherein the goddess is, *inter alia*, mentioned to be possessing no head (*viśīrshṇī=śirorahitām*, according to Sāyaṇa). In this context we are reminded of an obscure myth alluded to in the *Ṛgveda* (IV.59.6) which mentions the Dawn as "wandering headless" (*hitvā śiro charat*). However, it would be most tempting here to draw a comparison between the "headless" Nirṛti of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* and the recently found Chalcolithic evidence about a headless goddess at Inamgaon.[692] The presence of a male figure of an inarticulate physiognomical type along with the goddess at Inamgaon is further remarkable although its parallelism with the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* description of such a male associate of the goddess is not exact.[693]

Nirṛti is said to be the presiding deity of the Mula asterism,[694] which is regarded most ill-natured and nasty and called Mūlabarhaṇī "uprooting".[695] Similarly a natural hole or cleft in the ground is considered to be that part of the earth which is under the control of Nirṛti.[696] The *Mānava Śrautasūtra* contains a full-fledged section called the "expiation rite for the babe born under the Mūla asterism" (*Mūlādijāta-śāntividhiḥ*).[697]

Ambikā

Tryambaka is the epithet of Rudra as early as the *Ṛgveda*[698] which in the later Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas is encountered more frequently.[699] The passages using the same Ṛgvedic mantra or its variant, in the *Yajurveda Saṁhitās*[700] make it clear in the context that the word *tryambaka* refers to three sisters, wives, or rather "mothers" associated with Rudra.[701] The term *pativedana* in the *Vājasaneyi* text defines the 'husband-finding', or possibly 'husband-becoming' aspect of Rudra.[702] Along with his sister Ambikā, evidently a name signifying 'the mother', or probably the mother-goddess, Rudra is asked to accept his portion in the sacrifice.[703] The Tryambaka Homa described in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[704] celebrates the goddess Ambikā or Ambā conjointly with Rudra and puts her on a par with him. As it has been explained for clarity in this text: 'Ambikā, indeed, is the name of Rudra's sister; and this share belongs to him conjointly with a Strī (woman), therefore (these oblations) are called *tryambakaḥ*.'[705]

Apart from other facts, we wish here to draw attention to a significant point. By the time of the later Saṁhitās a contextual change in the connotation and ritual application of the Ṛgvedic stanza, VII 59.12, seems to have occurred. It is important that in the *Atharvaveda*[706] this text is for Aryaman, instead of Tryambaka, and has been inserted in the mantras of the Marriage Hymn. The second line from the original has been altogether dropped here, besides other changes, the term *pushṭivardhana* is replaced by *pativedana*, meaning 'husband-seeking'. In the *Yajurveda* the significance of the *mantra* seems to have further evolved but with the god Tryambaka. Besides having it along with several other verses dedicated to Tryambaka-Rudra,[707] the main line has been repeated as making literal use of both the texts from the *Ṛgveda* and the *Atharvaveda*; thus reading:[708]

> *Tryambakaṁ yajāmahe sugandhiṁ pushṭivardhanam*
> *urvārukamiva bandhanānmṛtyormukshīya māmṛtāt*
> *Tryambakaṁ yajāmahe sugandhiṁ pativedanam*
> *urvārukamiva bandhanādito mukshīya māmutaḥ*
> "To Tryambaka we make offering, the fragrant, increaser of prosperity;
> "Like a cucumber from its stem, may I be freed from death, not from immortality.
> "To Tryambaka we make offering, the fragrant, husband-finder,
> "Like a cucumber from its stem, may I be freed from here, not from there."

Evidently this additional aspect of 'husband-seeking' was of particular significance. The other important invokation to Rudra given here says: "This is thy allotted portion, O Rudra, rejoice in it, with thy sister Ambikā. This, O Rudra, is thy portion, the rat is thy beast."[709] The *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* adds further: "We have appeased, O Ambā, Rudra, the god Tryambaka; that he make us prosperous, that he may increase our wealth, that he may make us rich in cattle, that he may embolden us."[710] Apparently the goddess Ambā or Ambikā has been invoked here independently and with a view that she would be pleased along with Rudra to bestow prosperity etc. on the sacrificer.

Curiously enough the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* on this passage explains the word *tryambaka* as *strī-ambaka*.[711] According to Arbman, Rudra's cult association with the mother-goddesses is doubtless suggested from his epithet *tryambaka*.[712] However, the name of the goddess associated with Rudra in his *tryambaka* aspect is no doubt Ambā or Ambikā as is shown by the above citation from the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*. The Brāhmaṇa portion included in the *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā*[713] further informs that a maiden wishing husband should also go round the altar. They, evidently Rudra and Ambikā-mothers, shall allot her a husband, . . . and bestow *bhaga*, i.e. *saubhāgya*. But in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, we have it in the ritual details of the Tryambaka Homa, that the maiden ladies went round the altar, though motif appears to be the same but as an essential part of the ceremony.[714] We are informed that the members of the sacrificer's family walked thrice round the altar begging the god Tryambaka to free them from death and not from immortality; then the maidens worshipped Ambikā for that sister of Rudra, named Ambikā, is indeed the dispenser of happiness (*bhaga*);[715] and thereafter Tryambaka with the mantra VS III.60 *b*, by going round the altar to get suitable husbands as the god Tryambaka is believed to be the fragrant bestower of husbands. The invokation of Ambikā together with Rudra by unmarried girls wishing husbands indicates no doubt a fertility concept.

The expression '*bhagasya īshṭe*' has been rendered by Eggeling[716] by 'is the dispenser of happiness'. But it is possibly dangerous to translate the word '*bhaga*' here in the light of passages preserved in the *Maitrāyaṇī* and *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitās*. The former text comments that 'Ambī is verily the woman, *Bhaga* by name. Hence are the *tryambaka* (cakes).'[717] However in the *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā* the name is changed to *Bhagā*.[718] Certainly *Bhagā* is a curious name, nowhere else found in Vedic literature. But it seems to be a prototype for the epithet *Bhagavatī* of the goddess. The *Kapishṭhala-Kaṭha Saṁhitā* has an additional expression in the Tryambaka context, where the goddess is addressed as follows: 'Thou art *bhaga*. May we attain thy *bhaga*.'[719] However, as early as the *Rgveda* we meet the phrase *bhagavatī* as an epithet to Vāk-Cow, lauded as the transcendental principle of creation in the context.[720] The *Paippalāda Saṁhitā* in one place describes a woman as '*bhagabhaktā bhagavatī suvīrā*'.[721] The *Atharvaveda* has used *bhagavatī* as qualifying certain potential herbs.[722] But it is only[723] in the apocryphal text of the *Ṛgveda* that we have Bhagavatī as an epithet of the goddess Rātrī-Durgā.[724]

It may not be impossible that this name Bhaga, Bhagā (Bhagavatī) signified here the *yoni* (or female creative) principle. This view seems to be suggested in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā*, which says: 'The Autumn is Rudra's *Yoni* Ambikā, the sister.'[725] Here through some obscure identification Ambikā, representing the Tryambaka nature of Rudra, has been equated with the Autumn. This opinion is similarly expressed in the other texts, giving rather a folk exposition to this relationship that the Autumn is Rudra's sister Ambikā, for he (possibly as fever) follows her so in this season men are killed in a great number.[726] But the actual motif is however not clear. May be that the Autumn was equated with the goddess Ambikā for her festivals were held in this season (September-October). But we cannot be sure to what extent the nine-day celebrations (*navarātra*) of the great goddess Durgā-Ambikā in their present form are to be connected with it.

The essential details of the Tryambaka Homa described in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[727] may be given as follows: 'The sacrificer bakes in the sacrificial fire as many cakes as there are members in his family, removes them all into a dish, and taking a fire-brand from the sacrificial fire, he carries them aside towards the north. He keeps one of the cakes aside, and offers the rest on *palāśa* leaves at the cross-roads, cutting out a bit from each of them. He then buries the additional cake representing Rudra's favourite animal, the mole, in an ant-hill in order to free his cattle from his darts. Then he collects the bits of cake, and returns to the sacrificial fire, expecting the satisfied God to make him rich and prosperous, and invokes his blessing on his own family and cattle. The members of the sacrificer's family as well as unmarried girls walk thrice round the sacrificial fire, the former begging God Tryambaka to free them from death and not from immortality, and the latter to bestow husbands on them. Finally, the sacrificer takes the bits of cake collected from the offerings at the cross-roads, and having packed them into two net-work baskets (one for Rudra and the other for Ambikā), ties them to the two ends of a bamboo staff or the beam of a balance to show probably the equality of the two deities, and goes out towards the north until he meets a tree or an ant-hill, and fastens them thereon. He then requests Rudra to depart to his own country and returns home again.' That the leading ritual of the ceremony was featured by the offering at the cross-roads is a fact which points to the popular norm of the worship to the mother-goddess. It was accepted as a part of the Tryambaka Sacrifice possibly as recognising in it her full-fledged role and due share apart from other yājñic elaborations.

The Ashṭakā rites, a sort of domestic offerings to the Dead, as detailed in the *Kalpasūtras*, also include "a very odd rite", says Keith, "prescribed by the Mānava School (ii.9.1-3), for the evening before the last Ashṭakā: at the cross-roads the sacrificer kills a cow, dismembers it, and divides the flesh among the passers-by."[728] But in the Sūtra texts, there is a difference of opinion regarding the presiding deities of the Ashṭakā festivals. Keith has connected these rites, possibly on the authority of the *Kāṭhaka Gṛhyasūtra* and Pāṇini, with the offerings to the Fathers, and thinks that the offerings, made along with them to the Mothers, signify the latter as wives of the Fathers.[729]

Recently D.D. Kosambi has discussed this problem and contested the above view.[730] He remarks that if they are just Wives-of-the-Fathers and an aspect of multiple mother-in-common, the *piṇḍas* offered to them would not have to be at the cross-roads, because the domestic offerings at the eve are for the special deities and ancestors of the family. In his opinion, and rightly so, the 'Mothers' figuring as recipients of the offerings should not be regarded as 'mere ancestresses, but as separate goddesses in their own right whom it was necessary to appease, although Vedic practice did not openly enjoin this'.[731]

As we have noted above,[732] the Ekāshṭakā personified was the original presiding deity of the particular ceremony held under that name. About her character as a full-fledged goddess, there remains hardly any doubt from the passages in the *Atharvaveda* and especially in the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, where she is said to have undergone a penance and produced the great god Indra as her child. It is not difficult to understand that the personification of that day as a goddess, probably a new-year festival in origin,[733] was already established in the *Atharvaveda* and it was only later that the Māsika Funerary Offerings came to be assimilated in the Ashṭakā rites. The fact is far from doubt in the Sūtra texts also as the repeated oblation made with the phrase 'To the Ashṭaka Svāhā' features throughout these curious rites. Apparently, the Ashṭakās themselves were regarded as deified beings and their recognition as mother-goddesses was a logical one. The especial offering to them included also wine, the scum of boiled rice, collyrium etc. in the 'Anvashtakya' or the rite following Ashtaka festivals.[734]

While making an enquiry into the details of these ceremonies, it can be argued that the rites performed at the cross-roads and those with the special offering of wine and flesh etc. represented the mode of worship to the mother-goddesses as part of the folk religion. References to the mother-goddesses forming a group or a collective team also signify their low-graded soil-born cultus, of which the antiquity goes far back into the primitive ages. The expression 'mothers' in the plural presumably belonged in origin to the same realm of kindred thinking which conceived such uncanny beings, like imps and goblins, ogres and other spirits, mostly in the plural, and forming hosts of their type.

Not rarely the hosts of female beings are mentioned in Rudra's proximity. The wild-haired women with horrid shriekings form the retinue of Paśupati-Rudra including dogs, jackals and other ill-omens.[735] The loud-shouting, long-haired female hosts of Rudra are paid homage also in another mantra.[736]

It is a curious motif of relationship often discussed by scholars that Rudra and Ambikā are described in the earlier tradition as brother and sister. However, their conjoint worship by unmarried girls for procuring husband would presumably suggest that both were related to each other not merely as brother and sister, but possibly also as husband and wife. No doubt the ambiguity of such an 'awkward' relationship, if at all it is to be understood through any justification of the Aryan social custom, or by way of some original cult symbolism, was cleared up by the time of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*,[737] which for the first time maintains Rudra as the consort of Ambikā and Umā.

It may be recalled that the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā* qualifies Ambikā as the 'womb of Rudra' (*rudrasya yoniḥ*),[738] thereby implying her status as his mother. In the same passage she is called 'a woman named as uterus' (*strī bhaganāmnī*),[739] and it in no way seems fantastic that the goddess Ambikā was represented in her cultus through the symbol of a female organ, *yoni* or *bhaga*.[740]

However, by the time of the Vedic Saṁhitās the term *tryambaka* appears to have already been accepted as a regular epithet of Rudra; its original implication thus remaining obscure and a problem for mere guess. Only once in the entire Vedic literature, Agni is qualified as the 'son of three mothers' (*trimātā*),[741] which palpably is the nature akin to that of Rudra as *Tryambaka*. Thus, the Ambikā of Tryambaka-Rudra myth was probably understood also as Rudra's mother, a case of relationship relevant on the divine plane and also found widely accepted in the mythologies of the ancient world.

Besides Ambā[742] or Ambikā,[743] several other variants or derivative forms of the same original word seem to be freely used in Vedic literature, to wit, *ambi*,[744] *ambī*,[745] *ambālī*,[746] *ambālikā*,[747] *ambayāvī*.[748] That these all generically denote 'mother' is the view widely held by scholars. But of these words Ambā and Ambikā only appear to be used as the name of a mother-goddess, as is evident from the passages discussed above.

To this may also be added the name Ambālikā. In the *Yajurveda*, Ambā, Ambikā and Ambālikā occur as the three mother-names.[749] The context is of the Horse Sacrifice. It seems that at the core of all ritual deliberations of this sacrifice, a very curious, rather orgiastic, fertility rite was to take place in which the Chief Queen lay down beside the dead horse.[750] This ceremony of sleeping with the slaughtered horse (or his organ) evidently represented a barbarous and primitive practice of kindred belief. Originally the particular rites ensuring fertility were possibly quite elaborate as can be guessed from the *Yajurveda* and the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*. But they seem to have been much abbreviated in the Brāhmaṇa description.[751] The three names invoked by the sacrificer's wife for help are presumably just three variant addresses to the same person or deity. Do we have here a reference to the three mother-goddess names, associated with Tryambaka (who has three mothers)?

According to Eggeling, these names are possibly just three variants used in addressing a mother (Mütter, Mütterchen, Mütterlein), or, indeed, as here, any woman (good lady! good woman!).[752] On the basis of the evidence in the Śrauta-sūtras, it is described to be the formula which the assistant priest made the king's wives say whilst leading them up to the slain horse to cleanse it.[753] As is suggested by Weber, possibly the three minor queens were thus addressed by the king's first wife.[754] Though whatever might have been the ritual employment of the text in the later tradition, the expressions *Ambā*, *Ambikā* and *Ambālikā* meaning 'mother' were possibly not simply the address by the chief queen to the king's three minor wives or certain other women. Weber's translation of the words '*na mā nayati kaśchana*' etc. by 'nobody shall lead me (by force to the horse; but if I do not go) the (wicked) horse will lie near (another woman such as) the (wicked) Subhadrā living in Kāmpīla',[755] is apparently a twisted one adapted to suit his own opinion. Besides other facts, a literal and simple rendering of the text may be attempted as follows: "O Ambā, O Ambikā, O Ambālikā, let no one lead me (by force to the horse). The (dead) horse should sleep with Subhadrikā, the dweller in Kāmpīla."[756] This implies that the chief queen being naturally reluctant to take part in the abhorrent rite of lying down with the horse invokes the help of the goddess; the three addresses may either be taken as the three names of the same goddess, or as her three aspects. The latter implication would possibly connect the names Ambā, Ambikā and Ambālikā to the triple nature of the goddess in the Tryambaka myth.

Parenthetically, it may be added here that the aspect of Rudra 'having three mothers' did not find any favour both in Vedic and the subsequent mythology; besides whatever suggestion to this nature may we have only from the epithet *tryambaka* occurring throughout in Indian literature, there will be found hardly any other significant expression alluding to it. On the contrary, the other interpretation of the word, viz., 'having three eyes', is supported significantly by the entire tradition of later art and mythology as the third eye, in fact, came to be an invariable trait of Rudra-Śiva's iconography and to it great significance has been attached in Purāṇic and Āgamic thought.

Keith opines that Ambikā 'seems to be derived from the epithet Tryambaka'.[757] But this view can hardly be attested to. In the several passages as cited above, Tryambaka appears just as an epithet of Rudra and is somewhat obscure in its meaning. The *Traiyambaka* rites performed in honour of Rudra include an invocation to the goddess Ambikā: this particular fact has been commended by the Brāhmaṇa writers only in an ambiguous way, "Since this share belongs to him with a '*strī*' (or female), these (offerings) are called *tryambakah*."[758] Or, 'since Ambī is the '*strī*' named Bhaga (or Bhagā), these (offerings) are *tryambakāḥ*.'[759] The evidence we have in such Brāhmaṇa commentaries may only suggest, that at a stage of religious evolution, with the rapprochement of the cults of Rudra and the goddess Ambikā, the independent conceptions or names of the two deities implied by the words *tryambaka* and *ambikā* were sought to be combined by their followers. This stage seems to be represented in the *Yajurveda Saṁhitās* and their Brāhmaṇa commentaries.

We do not know if the word '*strī*' in the above mentioned passages as qualifying Ambikā had something to do with the '*strī*' in RV VII.104.24.[760]

Umā and Other Names

In the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*[761] Rudra is celebrated as the husband of Ambikā and Umā. Further we get from this text several other names of the goddess, namely Durgi-Durgā,[762] Kātyāyanī, Kanyākumārī,[763] Varadā, Chhandasāṁ Mātā,[764] Vedamātā[765] and Sarasvatī.[766] But their exact significance is difficult to be made out. To this list may be added the names Kālī, Karālī, and Bhadrakālī. In the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* the seven tongues of Agni are named as Kālī, Karālī, Manojavā, Sulohitā, Sudhūmravarṇā, Sphuliṅginī and Viśvāruchī.[767] These are here said to be goddesses (*devīḥ*). Strangely enough Kālī is the well known name of the fierce mother-goddess, the same possibly called Bhadrakālī in the Gṛhyasūtras[768] in view of her propitiated aspect.

According to Weber many of these names were originally derived from the various functions of fire and appear to have their basis in the fire cult. In his words, "As in Śiva, first of all two gods, Agni and Rudra, are combined, so too his wife is to be regarded as a compound of several divine forms, and this becomes quite evident if we look over the mass of her epithets. While one set of these, as Umā, Ambikā, Pārvatī, Haimavatī, belong to the wife of Rudra, others as Kālī, Karālī carry us back to the wife of Agni, while Gaurī and others perhaps refer to Nirṛti, the goddess of all evil."[769] He has further stated: "Moreover, Kātyāyanī, Kanyākumārī and Durgā are already well known to us as names of Śiva's consort: and indeed, they all appear to carry us back to the flames of fire. It is true that as regards Kātyāyanī this is somewhat difficult: though when we consider the great importance of the Kātya family in reference to the sacrificial system of the Brāhmaṇs, it does not seem very improbable that a particular kind of fire, which perhaps was introduced by one of the Kātyas, was called after him, and that this name was then associated with Kālī, Karālī, and Durgā, which were originally mere appellations of fire. Kanyā-Kumārī or 'the maidenly' is a very fitting epithet of the holy, pure, sacrificial flame; . . ." However in want of any definite evidence even such ingenious suggestions of a scholar no less great than Weber are of no use. Further, on the basis of the available evidence for the period under study, we are unable to ascertain how far the above noted epithets had come to designate the same goddess associated with Rudra as his consort.

Umā appears to be a goddess originally distinct from Ambikā. But about her we know nothing from the earlier texts. The word occurs only once in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[770] and as meaning 'flax'. But the context seems to be of some significance. It is said that 'the inner membrane (amnion) of the womb from which Prajāpati was born consists of flax, and the outer membrane (chorion) of hem'.[771] But the real symbolism underlying this statement is not known, though some fertility motif seems to be attached with the term '*umā*' denoting flax.

However, no antecedents of the goddess Umā are known prior to the *Kena Upanishad*.[772] This text mentions a greatly shining woman, Umā Haimavatī by name, who is said to be conversant with the mighty Brahman. She is regarded only next to Him, but certainly superior in position to the gods Agni, Vāyu, and Indra, whom she instructs about the identity of Brahman.[773]

The epithet Haimavatī is often regarded to indicate that she was a goddess of the Himālayan region.[774] Literally it denotes the woman 'who belongs to the mountain Himavat', or 'the daughter of Himavat'. As pointed out by Keith, 'It is also possible that in Umā, who appears at the very end of the Vedic period proper as the wife of Rudra, we have a goddess of the mountains, as she is given the epithet Haimavatī, and is recognised in the later mythology as the daughter of the mountain Himavat. On the other hand it must be remembered that, as Rudra is essentially a god of the mountains in the Vedic texts, it was only natural that his wife should be made out to be from the mountains, and that, therefore, we have to do here simply with the same principle of setting a female beside the god which gives us Indrāṇī, and the other wives of the gods, though it is tempting to see in Umā a form of the mother goddess of the Dravidians.'[775]

Several scholars have suggested the derivation of the Sanskrit word *uma* from *amma* in the Dravidian languages.[776] But for this we do not have any positive evidence in the Vedic texts. The epithet Haimavatī can hardly be explained in the Dravidian context for there is no proof of the prevalence of Dravidian tongue in the Himālayan region.[777] Further we may point out that in the *Kena Upanishad* Umā-Haimavatī does not appear as yet associated with Rudra. It is only in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* that she figures as the wife of Rudra besides Ambikā, who seems to be related with him from the very beginning of her mention in Vedic literature. This probably leads us to the fact that it was only through her identification with Ambikā that Umā (-Haimavatī) came to be regarded Rudra's wife. In fact, the epithets *Ambikāpati* and *Umāpati* occur together in the same Gāyatrī dedicated to Rudra and indicate beyond doubt the identification of Umā with Ambikā as it was understood in the pantheon.

Apart from the *Kena Upanishad* and the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, Umā seems to have found mention only twice in the entire bulk of Vedic literature, namely in the *Jaiminīya Gṛhyasūtra*[778] and the *Atharva-pariśishṭa*.[779] Thus she is to be regarded as a very late inclusion in the Vedic religion.

Besides the contention held by Weber regarding Kālī's connection with the fire cult, it may be further noted that this goddess name possibly has some reference to the abstract deity Kāla. The name Kālī was presumably evolved on the same lines as Indrāṇī for Indra, Varuṇānī for Varuṇa, etc. Kālī was essentially a goddess of fierce nature as corresponding to Kāla, who personified absolute Time and later on Death.

In the *Kāṭhaka Gṛhyasūtra*, Kālī and Bhadrakālī occur as two goddess names, worshipped side by side with such great gods as Agni, Soma, Varuṇa, Indra, etc.[780] Bhadrakālī being the propitious or benign aspect of Kālī seems to have found favour in household or popular worship.[781]

There are two Gāyatrī texts that shed important light on the subject. One each is preserved in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā* and the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*. From them it is clearly brought out that in the later Vedic period a tendency was at work as identifying several goddesses from different traditions. Thus from the one in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā* it is shown that Gaurī and Girisutā were regarded the names of a single goddess.[782] Similarly in the other text, Kātyāyanā (Kātyāyanī), Kanyakumārī (Kanyākumārī) and Durgi (Durgā) are invoked as the names of an identical divinity.[783] The name Durgi seems to be only a variant for Durgā. As observed by one scholar, this possibly indicates that the word Durgā was a later Sanskritized form of the original Durgā.[784] But Durgā is also known from other Vedic texts and we have already discussed the evidence in a previous section.[785] However, it may be further noted that we have also a *Durgākalpa* contained in the *Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*.[786]

The Śūlagava sacrifice detailed in the *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra* provides yet another evidence as regards the goddesses associated with Rudra-Śiva.[787] The names uttered in offering the oblations include the wives of the gods as Indrāṇī, Śarvāṇī and Bhavānī. But according to the *Hiraṇyakeśī Gṛhyasūtra*[788] after propitiating the eight deities or forms of Rudra, namely Hara, Mṛḍa, Aśani, Śaṁkara, etc., the oblations are given to the wife of each of them with the formula: "*Bhavasya devasya patnyai svāhā*" (oblation to the wife of God Bhava), and not by their proper names; from it we can guess that these goddesses who were the female counterparts of Rudra in his multiple aspects were also believed to have individual names, though not invoked in the ceremony by calling them.

From the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* we know that with the god Rudra-Maheśvara-Śiva a goddess or principle by name Māyā had already come to be essentially associated as his female energy or counterpart.[789] But the text deals with this theme in a mystic style and brings out the main tenets of the early Māheśvara philosophy believing Śiva to be the possessor or lord of Māyā, who is identified as Prakṛt or Nature herself.

Māyā the Asura Goddess

Of outstanding importance is the mention, in the *Atharvaveda*, of goddess Māyā by whose name the Asuras identified Virāj.[790] Māyā appears to have been the prominent female divinity of the Asuras. In the *Ṛgveda*, the term *māyā* occurs no less than sixty times, especially connected with the gods Mitra and Varuṇa, also Indra, whose 'occult power' is frequently mentioned. Indeed, for them particularly, often in collocation with *māyā* is used the epithet *Asura* 'mysterious lord'. The simultaneous application of *Asura* and *māyā* can be traced to such an extent that Macdonell believes that "to the Vedic poets *asura* must have meant 'possessor of occult power' as such would have been potentially applicable to hostile beings."[791] Thus the word *māyā* appears to have been used as an attribute of the hostile Asuras; doubtless having in the beginning a derogatory intention as opposed to the gods and their qualities.[792] In fact, certain expressions to this nature occur in the later part of the *Ṛgveda*. By this time the application of the term *asura* was becoming restricted to the demons, and in the subsequent literature it (in the plural, *asurāḥ*) usually denotes the demon-class, and not the gods but their rivals.

In RV VII.104.34, Indra is invoked to slay the male as well as female demons who triumph because of *Māyā*. It is stated that the 'Mūradevāḥ' people with bent necks should fall and perish and see no more the rising sun. Presumably, in this mantra, we have a reference, though shrouded, to the female genius named Māyā, due to whom the non-Vedic people and their gods (*mūradevāḥ*) were believed to prevail.

However, Māyā as the personified being is mentioned for the first time quite explicitly in AV VII.8.22. As it has:[793] "She (Virāj) ascended; she came to the Asuras; the Asuras called to her: 'O Māyā, come!' Of her Virochana, son of Prahrāda, was the young (*vatsa*), the metal-vessel was vessel; her Dvimūrdhan, son of Ritu, milked; from her he milked *māyā*; that Māyā the Asuras subsist upon; one to be subsisted becomes he who knows thus."

Even more explicit is the reference in the *Yajurveda* where goddess Earth is asked to be firm for universal well being as she is made the Āsurī Māyā in the wonted manner (or 'by food', *svadhaya*).[794] Elsewhere, requesting Agni to interdict various deities and principles from injury, the name of great Asura-Māyā is also admitted as one of them; the other names being those of Pṛthivī, Hrī, Aditi-Virāj, Aditi and creation's First Creature.[795] She is lauded as the guardian of Tvashṭā, the birthplace of Varuṇa, the Ewe from the loftiest region, the thousandfold great Māyā of the Asuras.[796] Though her mention as a personalised entity we have only rarely in Vedic literature, and even her character as a goddess is not at all explicitly stated, excepting the passages quoted above, it is not difficult to comprehend reasons for her being inadequately represented in the Vedic literature. She was not a deity of the Aryan fold, and thus in the details of *yajña* rituals, that formed the theme of Brāhmaṇa texts, her mention and invokation was hardly to occur frequently. Yet it can easily be gleaned from the above citations that Māyā was a female deity of the Asuras, her character as a great (*mahī*) mother-goddess being evident in the epics and later literature.

However, attention may be drawn to a few other significant passages, besides those as quoted above. In an Atharvanic rite to improve sexual vigour, an *arka*-amulet is regarded to effect virility of a man and his organ in the same way as a black one (*asita*) spreads himself at pleasure getting several forms from the Asura's Māyā.[797] Presumably it alludes to some link of Māyā with conceptions of human fecundity and procreation.

The other name of Māyā seems to be Dīrghajihvī 'Long-tongued'. This fact is hinted at in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (*āsurī vai dīrghajihvī*).[798] The legend of Dīrghajihvī as hostile to the gods and the sacrifice finds categorical mention in the Brāhmaṇa texts.[799] The story given by the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* is thus presented by Caland:[800]

> Dīrghajihvī was a female Asura. She used to lick at all the Soma . . . Indra, wishing to seize her could not seize her. He said, 'Let nobody sacrifice, for this Dīrghajihvī licks at all the Soma.' Now Sumitra, the son of Kutsa, was a handsome (young man). To him said Indra: 'Sumitra, thou art handsome; with a handsome (young man) women like to chat; make this Dīrghajihvī chat with thee.' He went and said to her: 'Dīrghajihvī, love me.' She said: 'Thou hast one single penis, but I have on each member a cunnus. This does not agree.' He returned (to Indra) and said: 'She says to me that I have only one penis, whilst she has on each member a cunnus, and that this does not agree.' He (Indra) said: 'On each member of thine I will make a penis.' Having covered these (penes) with his upper garment he came to her.' Further it has that Sumitra came to an understanding with Dīrghajihvī and as they lay down together Indra and Sumitra slew her.

From it we know that the sacrifice destroying Asura Ogress, named Long-tongued, was a mighty one and even Indra could not seize her straightway. The most important aspect of her figure has been distinctly specified in the passage, namely she had wombs on every part of her body. This points out to a curious trait of her character. However, in later mythology, this motif gets associated with Indra himself through a different legend in the epics and Purāṇas. We need not speculate any forced connection between the two cases. The *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* has recorded, no doubt, a unique fertility myth—obviously to be regarded non-Aryan in origin—of the great mother-goddess worshipped in the Asura tradition.

The name Dīrghajihvī 'Long-tongued' presumably refers to her terrible aspect, doubtless indicated by her yajña-destructing and ogrish nature, somewhat akin to the later mother-goddess figure of Kālī with the prolapsus tongue.

However, the most valued information regarding the goddess Māyā comes from an unexpected source to which the attention was first drawn by Prof. Johnston.[801] In the 3rd century B.C., the Qxyrynchus Papyrus (No. 1280) recorded the names of the great mother-goddesses, worshipped in the several leading countries of the ancient world, Isis, Atargatis, Astartae, Nanaia and others, with 'Māiyā' who was the great Indian mother-goddess, worshipped in the Gangetic valley. She presided especially over rain and fertility and was invoked as bringing the floods in the Ganges. According to Johnston, the name 'Māiyā' can be equated, indeed, with the goddess 'Māyā' occurring in Aśvaghosha's *Saundarananda* (2nd cent. A.D.) as the goddess of heaven (*divi māyeva devatā*). Further references from the epics to this goddess Māyā have been discussed by Dr. V.S. Agrawala.[802] He thinks '*mā*', '*māyi*', '*māyiā*' are the several Prakrit variants of this name.[803]

Another view can also be maintained that the name 'Māiyā' of the Papyrus can be derived from Skt. *mātṛkā*, meaning 'mother'. But the term *mātṛkā* could not have sufficed alone in naming the great Indian mother-goddess in the list of the Papyrus whose worship, as we know from it, was in ascendency in the Gangetic Valley and indeed who was considered to be on a par with the other mighty goddesses of Egypt, Assyria, Crete and Iran. Thus the idenification of this 'Māiyā' with Māyā does not seem unwarranted.

The Doctrines of Prakṛti and Śakti

In the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*, Māyā appears in the role of designate Nature (*Prakṛti*).[804] Her owner is called 'Māyin', the great lord Maheśvara who in the capacity of 'Māyin' creates all this manifestation and principles like Rhythms, Sacrifices, Ceremonies, Ordinances, the past, the future, and what else the Vedas declare. In the light of later philosophies, the term Māyā has been often understood in this context as introducing the doctrine of Illusion. But there cannot be missed the fact that the theory of Māyā at the stage of Upanishadic philosophy had in its background the cult of goddess Māyā and as her spouse the acceptance of Maheśvara-Śiva seemingly represented the commingling of the prevalent systems and worships of these two divinities.[805] As discussed by Prof. R.D. Ranade in this passage, the word *māyā* meant "power" instead of "illusion" as should also be the case in RV VI.47.18 (=*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* 2.5.19); possibly here it is similar to the expression "Śakti" for the god's energy or female counterpart.[806]

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1. *Tuvikshatrāmajarantimurūchīm*/ VS, 21.5; AV, VII.6.2.
2. Ibid.
3. *ādityā vai prajāḥ*, TB, 1.8.8.1; also ŚB, 5.5.2.10; *Tāṇḍya Brāḥ*. 13.9.5; 18.8.12.
4. AV, III.22.1; see Griffith, *Atharvaveda Translation* (Benares, 1916), Vol. I, p. 115, fn.
5. AV, VI.38.1.
6. AV, VI.81.3.
7. AV, VI.81.2.
8. AV, II.28.4-5.
9. *Ait. Āraṇyaka* 3.1.6; Keith, *Translation* (Oxford, 1909), p. 247.
10. Also see *Jaiminīya Up. Brāh*. 1.41.
11. 1.1.9.1-3; also *Gopatha Br*. 1.2.15.
12. 24.12.2-6; W. Caland, *Translation* (Calcutta, 1931), p. 615.
13. 1.7; Keith, *Ṛgveda Brāhmaṇas* (Cambridge, 1920), p. 111.
14. RV, VIII.101.15.
15. RV, III.58.1; also I.164.9=AV, I.9.9.
16. *aditirhi gauḥ*, ŚB, 14.2.1.7; 2.3.4.34.
17. VI.1.3.5-7: *Mekhalayā yajamānaṁ dīksha-yati yoktreṇa patnīṁ mithunatvāya* (5) *Yajño dakshiṇāmabhyadhyāyat tāṁ samabhavat tadindro'chāyat so'manyata yo vā ito janish-yate sa idaṁ bhavishyatīti tāṁ prāviśat tasyā indra evājāyata so'manyata yo vai madito' paro janishyate sa idaṁ bhavishyatīti tasyā anumṛśya yonimāchchhinat sā sūtavaśā' bhavat tat sūtavaśāyai janma* (6) *Tāṁ haste nyaveshṭayata tāṁ mṛgeshu nyadadhāt sā kṛshṇavishāṇā'bhavadindrasya yonirasi mā mā hiṁsīriti'kṛshṇavishāṇām pra yachchhati sayonimeva yajñam karoti sayonim dakshi-ṇāṁ sayonimindraṁ sayonitvāya*/ Also see Keith, *Translation*, Part 2 (Cambridge, 1914), p. 488.
18. VI.1.3.7: *Yoniḥ kṛshṇavishāṇā yonāveva*

yonim̐ dadhāti yajñasya sayonitvāya|

19. *Supra.*

20. 3.2.1.18-28.

21. 3.2.4.16: *Idam̐ mano vāganuvadati dhīrasi dakshiṇeti dhiyā . . . hyeshāditirasyubhayataḥ śīrshṇīti . . . tenobhayataḥśīrshṇīm̐ tasmādāhaditirasyubhayataḥśīrheṇīti|*

22. 3.2.1.25-8.

23. "Nidhiśṛṁga (Cornucopia): A Study in Symbolism", *Prince of Wales Museum Bulletin*, No. 9, pp. 5 f.

24. AV, VIII.6.14; see V.S. Agrawala, "Cornucopia in Literature", *Studies in Indian Art* (Varanasi, 1965), p. 54.

25. AV, VI.44.3: *Rudrasya mūtramasyamṛtasya nābhiḥ| Vishāṇakā nāma vā asi pitṛīṇām̐ mūlādutthitā vātīkṛtanāśanī||*

26. See also *Kauśika Sūtra* 31.6; Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharvaveda and the Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, p. 60; J. Gonda, *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism* (Utrecht, 1954), p. 87.

27. *Amṛtasya nābhi*, RV, VIII.101.15=*Tait. Āraṇyaka* 6.12.1.

28. AV, IX.1.4.

29. VS 29.60=*Tait. Sam̐.* VII.5.14.1; *Tait. Sam̐.* IV.4.12.5; *Kāṭhaka Sam̐.* 12.14; 45.10.

30. IV.4.12.1-5.

31. IV.4.12.5: *Vishṭambho divo dharunah pṛthivyā asyeśānā jagato vishṇupatnī| viśvavyachā ishayantī subhūtiḥ śivā no astvaditirupasthe||* Keith's *Translation*, part 2, p. 353.

32. Op. cit., p. 115.

33. ŚB, 14.1.1.6: *sa yaḥ sa vishṇuryajñaḥ saḥ, sa yaḥ sa yajñosau sa ādityaḥ|*

34. ŚB, 14.1.1.10.

35. ŚB, 6.1.2.8; 11.6.3.8; also *Kāṭhaka Sam̐.* 21.5; *Jaiminīya Brāh.* 2.77.

36. AV, X.6.2, where he is invoked along with Varuṇa, Mitra, Bhaga, Am̐śa and Vivasvān.

37. E.W. Hopkins, *Epic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1915), p. 222; *Vishṇu Purāṇa* III.1.42-3.

38. VS, XIII.31; AV, XIX.53.10; ŚB, 7.4.3.5; 7.5.1.5, *Ait. Br.* 8.21.10.

39. RV, IX.114.2.

40. ŚB, 7.5.1.6: *Ya sa kūrmo'sau sa ādityaḥ|* Also ŚB, 6.5.1.6.

41. Gonda, op. cit., pp. 18-20.

42. AV, VII.46.3.

43. RV, Khila portion II. 6.2.25 (*Śrī-Sūkta*).

44. Ibid., verse 26.

45. *Iyam̐ vai pṛthivyaditiḥ|* ŚB, 1.1.4.5; 2.2.1.19; 3.3.1.4; 5.3.1.4; 7.4.2.7; *Tait. Br.* 1.7.6.7; 2.4.6.8; *Ait. Br.* 1.8; *Gopatha Br.* II.1.25; also *Kāṭhaka Sam̐.* 24.4; 24.6: *Pṛthivyaditiḥ.*

46. *Tait. Br.* 1.7.6.7: *Iyam̐ pṛthivī vai devī aditir viśvarūpī|*

47. VS, XXI.6.

48. RV, IX.74.5; see V.S. Agrawala, "Aditi and the Great Goddess", *Indian Culture*, Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 407.

49. *Supra.*

50. *Kaush. Br.* 7.6: *Sordhvam̐ diśam̐ prājānādiyam̐ vā aditistasmādasyāmūrdhvā oshadhaya ūrdhva vanaspataya ūrdhvā manushyā uttishthantyūrdhvo'gnir dīpyate yadasvām̐ kim̐ chordhvameva tadāyattameshā hi tasyai dikprajñātā|* Keith, *Translation: Ṛgveda Brāhmaṇas* (Cambridge, 1920), p. 387.

51. ŚB, 10.6.5.5: *Bṛhad. Up.* 7.4.2.7: *Sarvam̐ vā attīti tadaditeradititvam̐ sarvasyāttā bhavati sarvamasyānnam̐ bhavati va evametadaditeradititvam̐ veda|*

52. *Kośam̐ duhanti kalaśam̐ chaturbilamiḍām̐ dhenum̐ madhumatīm̐ svastaye| Urjam̐ madantīmaditim̐ janeshvagne mā him̐sīḥ parame vyoman||*

53. AV, XX.137.2=RV, X.101.12.

54. On RV, X.101.12: "*Nishṭim̐ Ditim̐ svasapatnīm̐ giratīti Nishṭigrīr Aditiḥ*".

55. *Supra.*

56. AV, XV.18.4.

57. AV, VII.7.1.

58. *Supra.*

59. Both names interpreted from root *dā* 'to bind', as proposed by H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda* (Berlin, 1894), p. 202.

60. From root *dā* 'to give'; see Macdonell, op. cit., p. 123.

61. See ŚB, 5.3.1.40; and below.

62. ŚB, 7.4.2.7: *iyam̐ vā aditiriyam̐ hi idam̐ sarvam̐ dadate|* See also 5.3.1.4; cp. *Kāṭhaka Sam̐.* 8.2: *yat tadādatta tadaditiḥ.*

63. 4.22.

64. *Tait. Br.* 1.1.9.1.f; *Gopatha Br.* II.2.15.

65. *Tait. Br.* 3.1.1.4.

66. J. Przyluski, "The Great Goddess in India and Iran", *IHQ*, Vol. X, No. 3 (1934), p. 423.

67. Ibid.

68. AV, IX.1.1; *Pañchavim̐śa Br.* 21.10.12.

69. See Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 124.

70. AV, X.7.19.

71. Discussed by Przyluski, op. cit.

72. Similarly, see *Chhāndogya Up*. 3.1.1: *asau vā ādityo devamadhu.*

73. *Aditiḥ pāśaṁ pramumoktvetam*, 3.1.4.4; also *Mait. Saṁ*. 1.2.15; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 30.8.

74. ŚB, 1.5.1.17: *Svādityā aditaye syāmānehasaḥ.*

75. ŚB, 6.7.3.8.

76. III.22.1: *Hastivarchasaṁ prathatāṁ bṛhadyaśo adityā yattanvah sambabhūva| tat sarve samadurmahyametādviśve devā aditiḥ sajoshāḥ||* See further *Śāṅkhāyana Ar*. 12.1.

77. *Paippalāda Saṁ*. VI.10.3; XI.5.2; or *viśvarūpī*, *Tait. Saṁ*. 1.8.12.2; *Tait. Br*. 1.7.6.7.

78. *Paippalāda Saṁ*. 3.9.4: *Aditimaham iyaṁ huve śūraputrāṁ kanīnikām|*

79. *Aditirasyubhayatahśīrshṇī|* ŚB, 3.2.4.16-17; *Tait. Saṁ*. 1.2.4.2; 6.1.7.5. Compare *dvyāsyā* for Brahman's Cow in AV, V.19.7.

80. *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁ*. 3.1.8.

81. VS, IX.5.

82. AV, VIII.6.4.

83. RV, IX.96.15.

84. VS, 4.19; on it ŚB, 3.2.4.16.

85. Ibid.

86. *Tait. Saṁ*. 6.1.7.5: *Aditirasyubhayataḥ śīrshṇītyāha yadevādityaḥ prāyaṇīyo yajñānāmaditya udayanīyastasmādevamāha|*

87. *Mait. Saṁ*. 3.7.5.

88. ŚB, 3.2.3.1 ff.

89. J. Eggeling, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa Translation*, pt. II, pp. 47 ff.

90. ŚB, 3.2.3.1-6.

91. ŚB, 4.5.1-4.

92. Eggeling, op. cit., pt. II, p. 48.
The Opening and Concluding ceremonies are also elaborated in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (I.2.7; Haug, *Translation*, pp. 16 ff; Keith, *Ṛgveda Brāhmaṇas*, p. 111). Its rituals are treated in *Aśvalayana ŚS*, IV. 3.1-3; *Śāṅkhāyana ŚS*, V.5.1-7 and other texts, see Caland and Henry, *L'Agniṣṭoma*, pp. 28-9.

93. AV, VIII.9.21.

94. AV, III.10.1 ff.

95. Ibid., and also XV.16.2.

96. *Tait. Saṁ*. 7.4.8.1.

97. See Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras* (Delhi, 1959), pp. 415 f.

98. VS, VIII.43; ŚB, 4.5.8.10.

99. *Gāṁ mā.hiṁsīraditiaṁ virājam.*

100. *Gopatha Br*. 1.5.8; *Tait. Br*. 1.4.9.5.

101. ŚB, 6.2.34; *Tait. Br*. 1.1.5.10.

102. ŚB, 13.2.5.3.

103. AV, VIII.9.7.

104. AV, VIII.9.8-11; VIII.10.1-33; IX.2.5; etc.

105. AV, VIII.9.9-10.

106. AV, VIII.10.1.

107. See Gonda, op. cit., p. 67.

108. AV, VIII.9.1-12.

109. AV, IX.2.5.

110. AV, VIII.10.13-17.

111. AV, VIII.10.18-21; see Whitney, *Atharvaveda Translation*, Vol. II, p. 513.

112. AV, VIII.9.9.

113. '*mṛsantīṁ*', 'touching', 'who touches'; perhaps implying 'by (the power of) touching'.

114. AV, VIII.9.10.

115. AV, VIII.9.11: *Iyameva sā yā prathamā vyauchchhadāsvitarāsu charati pravishṭā| mahānto asyāṁ mahimāno antarvadhūrjigāya navagajjanitrī||*

116. AV, VIII.9.12-21.

117. AV, VIII.8.10.1.

118. AV, VIII.10.2-4.

119. AV, VIII.10.2.

120. AV, IX.2.5: *Sā te kāmaduhitā dhenuruchyate yāmāhur vāchaṁ kavayo virājam.*

121. AV, VIII.10.22-29.

122. *Virāḍannam*; *annam virāṭ*; *annaṁ vai virāṭ*; ŚB, 7.5.2.19; 8.3.2.13; 9.2.3.40; *Tait. Br*. 1.6.3.4; 1.8.2.2: *Tāṇḍya Br*. 4.8.4; *Ait. Br*. 1.5; 4.11; 5.19; 6.20; etc.

123. ŚB, 1.8.1.36; *Jaimi. Br*. 2.111; *Mait. Saṁ*. I. 66; *Kaush. Br*. 16.3; etc.

124. *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 35.15.

125. *Infra*.

126. ŚB, 12.6.1.40; 2.2.1.20; *Gopatha Br*. II.6.2, *Jaim. Br*. 2.85.

127. ŚB, 6.2.2.34; 6.3.1.21; 6.8.2.12; 9.1.1.31.

128. ŚB, 3.5.1.34.

129. ŚB, 14.6.11.3.

130. *Gopatha Br*. II.2.9.

131. *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 22.13.

132. *Infra*.

133. VS, VIII.43; ŚB, 4.5.8.10. See also *Mait. Saṁ*. 4.2.3: *gaur vai vāg, gaur virāḍ, gauriḍā, gauḥ khalveva gauḥ, gauridaṁ sarvam.*

134. Regarded as the mother of the Maruts (see above); see *Tait. Saṁ*. 2.1.3.3; 2.2.11.4; *Mait*. 3.13.12; 2.5.7. Sometimes she is also identified with Vāk *vāgvai pṛśniḥ*, *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 34.1; *Jaimi. Br*. 3.75.

135. See above.

136. AV, 4.38.8; 9.5.10; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 7.7.

137. *Mait. Saṁ*. 4.8.3; *Gopatha Br*. II.3.19; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 13.7.

138. *Āpo vai janayo'dbhyo sarvaṁ jāyate*, ŚB, 6.8.2.3; also ŚB, 11.1.6.1.
139. *Āpo vā'ambayaḥ*, *Kaush. Br.* 12.2; *Āpo asmān mataraḥ*, *Tait. Saṁ.* 1.2.1.1; 1.3.8.2; 1.1.5.1; 1.2.2.1.
140. ŚB, 1.1.1.14; 2.1.1.4; 4.5.7.7.
141. ŚB, 6.1.3.11.
142. *Apsu pṛthivī pratishṭhitā*, *Jaimi. Up. Br.* 1.2.3.2.
143. *Āpo devīrbṛhatīrviśvaśambhuvaḥ*, *Tait. Saṁ.* 6.1.2.3.
144. AV, I.33.1-2.
145. Ibid.
146. *Āpo varuṇasya patnaya āsan*, *Tait. Br.* 1.1.3.8; also see *Tait. Saṁ.* 3.4.5.1.
147. *Āpo varuṇānīḥ*, *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 8.5; *Kapishṭhala Saṁ.* 7.1. Sometimes also as *vāruṇī*, *Tait. Saṁ.* 2.1.9.2; *Mait. Saṁ.* 4.3.10; 4.4.2.
148. *Tait. Saṁ.* 5.1.4.2.
149. *Āpah pushkaraparṇam*, ŚB, 6.4.1.9; 10.5.2.6.
150. *Tait. Āraṇ.* 1.23.1.
151. *Brahma ha vai brahmāṇaṁ pushkare sasṛje*, *Gopatha Br.* I.1.16.
152. Macdonell, op. cit., pp. 134-5.
153. AV, II.2.3: *samudra āsāṁ sadanaṁ ma āhuryataḥ sadya ā cha prā cha yanti.*
154. AV, IV.37.3.
155. AV, II.2.4.
156. AV, II.2.4-5: *tābhyo devīr nama itkṛṇomi| vāḥ klandāstamishīchayo'kshakāmā manomuhaḥ||*
157. AV, 2.2.5; also see ŚB, 9.4.1.7-12.
158. ŚB, 11.5.1.4.
159. AV, IV.37.4.
160. *Tait. Saṁ.* 3.4.8.4-5.
161. AV, XIV.2.9.
162. ŚB, 11.6.1.1 ff.
163. *Jaimi. Up. Br.* 3.25.6-8; particularly, '*haso me krīḍā me mithunamme tanme yushmāsu*'.
164. AV, VIII.10.27: *taṁ puṇyaṁ gandhaṁ gandharvāpsarasa upa jīvanti*. See also *Mait. Saṁ.* 4.2.13.
165. ŚB, 9.4.1.4: *gandhena cha vai rūpeṇa cha gandharvāpsarasaścharanti . . .*
166. The order is reversed in ŚB, 10.5.2.20.
167. Weber, *Indische Studien*, Vol. XIII, p. 135, n. 3.
168. *Kaush. Br.* 6.1.
169. ŚB, 9.4.1.4; 13.4.3.8.
170. RV, IV.2.18; V.41.19; VII.33.11; X.95.10, 17.
171. RV, VII.33.11-12.
172. RV, X.95.1 ff.
173. RV, X.95.
174. ŚB, 11.5.1 ff.
175. *Kāth. Saṁ.* 8.10.3.
176. *Bṛhadd.* VII.143 ff.
177. AV, VI.118.1-2.
178. VS, XV.15 ff.
179. ŚB, 13.5.4.13.
180. *Kaush. Up.* 1.3.
181. Ibid. 1.4.
182. AV, XII.1.1-63.
183. *Supra.*
184. *Indravṛshabhā*, AV, XII.1-6. Also XII. 1.11, 18, 37.
185. AV, XII.1.10.
186. AV, XII.1.12; XII.1.42 (*parjanyapatnyai*); also I.2.1.
187. AV, XII.1.29.
188. AV, XII.1.43.
189. AV, XII.1.60.
190. AV, XII.1.
191. AV, XII.1.63.
192. AV, XII.1.48.
193. AV, XII.1.50.
194. AV, I.2.1.
195. *Yatheyaṁ pṛthivī mahī bhūtānāṁ garmādadhe| evā te dhriyatāṁ garbhoanu sūtuṁ savitave||* Also see V.25.2.
196. AV, I.2.1; XII.1.42.
197. ŚB, 7.4.1.8.
198. *Tait. Br.* 3.11.4.1: *agne pṛthivīpate*; *Gopatha Br.* II.2.9: *pṛthivī agneḥ patnī.*
199. ŚB, 1.3.1.15; 5.3.1.4.
200. AV, V.25.2.
201. ŚB, 7.3.1.20: *prajāpatir vai pṛthivyai janitā.*
202. *Tait. Saṁ.* 6.2.3.4 ff; *Mait. Saṁ*, 3.8.1; 4.1.10; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 31.8; *Kapishṭhala Saṁ.* 38.5; *Tait. Br.* 3.2.9.6; *Jaimi. Br.* 3.117; also see *Tāṇḍya Br.* 9.2.11.
203. *Tait. Saṁ.* 6.2.4.2; *Mait. Saṁ.* 3.8.3; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 25.2; *Kapishṭhala Saṁ.* 38.5.
204. RV, VIII.77.10; I.61.7.
205. ŚB, 14.1.2.11.
206. Eggeling, *Translation*, part V, p. 451.
207. AV, XII.1.48: *Varāhena pṛthivī saṁvidānā śūkarāya vi jihīte mṛgāya.*
208. *Tait. Saṁ.* 7.1.5.1; also see ŚB, 14.1.2.11.
209. Keith, *Translation of Tait. Saṁ.*, Vol. II, p. 560.
210. *Kath. Saṁ.* 8.2: *āpo vā idamāsan salilameva, sa prajāpatirvarāho bhūtvopanyamajjat, tasya vāvanmukhamāsīt tavatīṁ mṛdmudaharat seyaṁ abhavat.* Also *Kapishṭhala Saṁ.* 6.7.
211. *Tait. Br.* 1.1.3.6-7.
212. *Tait. Āran.* 10.1.10: *varāheṇa krishṇena*

śatabāhunā.
213. *Ait. Br.* 8.21.
214. For example, I.3.10-12.
215. *Vāg vai sarasvati*; *vāk tu sarasvatī*; ŚB, 2.5.4.6; 3.9.1.7; 7.5.1.31; 11.2.4.9; 12.9.1.13; *Ait. Br.* 3.1; 2.24; 6.7; *Tait. Br.* 1.3.4.5; 3.8.11.2; *Gopatha Br.* II.1.20; etc.
216. VS, XIX.
217. VS, XIX.12: *vāchā sarasvatī bhishak*.
218. VS, XIX.82-83, 93.
219. VS, XIX.94: *sarasvatī yonyāṁ garbhamantaraśvibhyāṁ patnī sukṛtaṁ bibharti| apāṁ rasena varuṇo na sāmnendraṁ śriyai janayannapsu rājā||*
220. VS, XIX-XXI; see ŚB, 12.7-9, giving its details.
221. VS, XX.63; also XXI.37, 54.
222. AV, V.25.1-13.
223. *Prati tishṭha virāḍasi vishṇuriveha sarasvatī| Sinīvālī pra jāyataṁ bhagasya sumatāvasat||*
224. AV, V.25.3=RV, X.184.2.
225. *Hiraṇyakeśī GS* 1.20.1; *Pāraskara GS* 1.7.2.
226. *Paipp. Saṁ.* 5.11.5; 11.1.6.
227. ŚB, 6.5.1.9; also see *Tait. Saṁ.* 2.4.6.2.
228. AV, VII.68.1-3.
229. AV, XIX.31.9-10.
230. AV, VII.10.1.
231. AV, V.23.1.
232. AV, XVI.4.4.
233. AV, XIV.2.20; XVIII.1.42.
234. AV, XIX.11.2.
235. AV, II.20.7.
236. Ibid.
237. AV, XIV.2.15.
238. VS, XXVIII.18.
239. VS, XXXVIII.12.
240. AV, VI.94.3.
241. AV, V.7.4.
242. ŚB, 2.5.1.11.
243. RV, IV.3.7.
244. RV, X.26.7.
245. *Tait. Br.* 2.7.2.1; ŚB, 3.1.4.9; *Ait. Ar.* 1.1.1.
246. *Tait. Br.* 2.5.7.4.
247. ŚB, 11.4.3.16.
248. See above.
249. *Mānava GS* 1.11.18.
250. AV, V.3.7; V.12.8; V.27.9; VS, XX.43; *Tait. Saṁ.* 4.1.8.2-3; etc.
251. AV, V.3.7.
252. AV, VI.100.1.
253. VS, 28.31.
254. *Vāgvai tisro devīḥ*, *Mait. Saṁ.* 1.10.9; *Kāṭh. Saṁ.* 36.3.
255. AV, VII.28.1.
256. See above.
257. *Jaimi. Br.* I.307: *ayaṁ vai loka iḷā*; *Mait. Saṁ.* 1.4.5; *Kaush. Br.* 9.2.
258. *Iḍā hi gauḥ*, ŚB, 2.3.4.34; 14.2.1.7; also *Mait. Saṁ.* 1.6.13; ŚB, 1.8.1.24; 3.3.1.4; etc.
259. *Paśavo va iḍā*, ŚB, 1.8.1.22; 7.1.1.27; *Jaimi. Br.* I.102; 122; 155; 330; *Ait. Br.* 2.9; 10.30; *iḍā nāma rūpaṁ paśūnām*, *Mait. Saṁ.* 4.2.4.
260. *Supra.*
261. VS, XXVIII.8; also alluded to in XX.43.
262. VS, XX.63.
263. VS, XXVIII.18; 21; 41; etc.
264. VS, XXVIII.18: *asprikshadbhāratī divaṁ rudrairyajñaṁ sarasvatīḍā vasumatī gṛhān . . .*
265. *Vāg vai tistro devīḥ*, *Mait. Saṁ.* 1.10.9; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 36.3.
266. *Tāṇḍya Br.* 20.14.2; Caland (*English Translation of*) *Pancaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa* (Calcutta, 1931), p. 538.
267. *Vāk sarasvatī*; *Vāg vai sarasvatī*; *Vāgeva sarasvati;* etc. ŚB, 2.5.4.6; 3.9.1.7; 7.5.1.31; 12.9.1.13; *Ait. Br.* 2.24; 3.1; 6.7; *Tāṇḍya Br.* 6.7.7; 16.5.16; *Tait. Br.* 1.3.4.5; 3.8.11.2; etc.
268. VS, XVIII.37.
269. ŚB, 5.4.5.2, 7.
270. ŚB, 9.3.4.17.
271. ŚB, 14.2.12.1.
272. ŚB, 12.8.3.19.
273. See Devasthali, *Religion and Mythology of the Brāhmaṇas* (Poona, 1965), p. 170.
274. ŚB, 12.7.3.5.
275. See above.
276. ŚB, 12.7.1.11; 12.7.2.7; 13.2.2.4; *Tait. Br.* 1.8.5.6; etc.
277. ŚB, 12.8.2.34.
278. See below.
279. ŚB, 3.2.4.3 f.
280. ŚB, 3.2.4.15-17.
281. ŚB, 3.2.1.18-23.
282. ŚB, 3.2.1.25 ff.
283. ŚB, 3.5.1.21.
284. ŚB, 2.2.4.4.
285. *Prajāpatirvā idamāsittasya vāg dvitīyāsīt, tāṁ mithunaṁ samabhavat, sā garbhamadhatta, sāsmādapākrāmat, semāḥ prajā asṛjata, sā prajāpatimeva punaḥ prāviśat|* *Kaṭh. Saṁ.* 12.5; also 27.1 and *Kapishṭhala Saṁ.* 42.1. Elsewhere in *Jaimi. Br.* (2.244) and *Tāṇḍya Br.* (20.14.2), but with no motif of their sexual relations and with somewhat altered details.
286. ŚB, 1.7.4.1 ff, *Ait. Br.* 3.33; *Tāṇḍya Br.* 8.2.10.

287. See above for similar divine relationship.
288. I.314: *vāg bhūtvā sarvaṁ vyabhavat.*
289. ŚB, 1.6.3.27; 5.1.5.6; 13.4.1.15; *Tait. Br.* 1.3.4.5.
290. ŚB, 3.1.3.22 (*Prajāpatir vai vākpati*); ŚB, 5.1.1.16 (*prajāpatir vai vāchaspati*).
291. Op. cit., p. 119.
292. Keith, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 207.
293. *Āśvalāyana GS* 3.4.
294. *Tait. Br.* 1.6.4.1.
295. VS, XXXI.18-22.
296. In post-Vedic period it is among the regular names of Sarasvatī.
297. *Gopatha Br.* I.1.33; *Tāṇḍya Br.* 10.12.7.
298. *Jaimi. Up. Br.* 1.28.1-10.
299. *Tait. Āra.* 1.9.4.
300. *Jaimi. Up. Br.* 1.10.1-2; also *Ait. Āra.* 1.3.2.
301. Also see V.S. Agrawala, *Vision in Long Darkness* (Varanasi, 1963), pp. 148 ff.
302. *Nirukta* II.23.1.
303. ŚB, 3.6.2.2.
304. RV, VIII.100.11; also see *Gopatha Br.* I.2.21; *Tāṇḍya Br.* 18.9.21; ŚB, 14.8.9.1; 9.1.2.17; etc.
305. *Gopatha Br.* II.2.9: *dhenā bṛhaspateḥ patnī.*
306. ŚB, 14.4.1.22; *Jaimi. Up. Br.* 2.2.5.
307. See above.
308. First suggested by V.S. Agrawala, "Aditi and the Great Goddess", *Indian Culture*, Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 409; S.K. Dikshit, *The Mother Goddess* (Poona, n.d.), p. 45.
309. VS, 31.22: *Śrīścha te Lakshmīścha patnyau.* The *Kāṇva Saṁhitā* has *patnyā* instead of *patnau.*
310. ŚB, 11.4.3.1 f; 2.6.3.2; 14.9.3.8.
311. *Gopatha Br.* I.1.34; *Jaiminīya Br.* I.271; *Tait. Br.* 3.9.4.7.
312. Gonda, op. cit., p. 214.
313. An apocryphal (Khila) hymn at the end of the fifth book of the *Ṛgveda*; also adopted with variations for other Vedas. See I. Scheftelowitz, "Śrīsūkta", *ZDMG*, Vol. 75 (1921), p. 37 ff; J. Gonda, *Ṛgvidhāna* (Utrecht, 1951), p. 50.
314. Summarised and discussed by J. Gonda, *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism*, p. 213.
315. Gerda Hartmann, *Beitrage zur Geschichte der Gothin Lakṣmī*, Thesis, Kiel, 1933.
316. Quoted in Gonda, op. cit., p. 213.
317. For its chronological position in Vedic literature, see Scheftelowitz, *Die Apokryphen des Ṛgveda* (Breslau, 1906).
318. H. Oldenberg, "Vedic words for "Beautiful" and "Beauty" and the Vedic sense of the Beautiful", *Rūpam*, No. 32, 1928.
319. Gonda, op. cit., pp. 177 ff.
320. The notion seems to be continued; e.g. see ŚB 8.6.2.4 where *Śrī* is said to have been bestowed upon Agni by the gods. See also ŚB 14.1.1.3, where the gods wished to procure *Śrī*.
321. RV, X.91.5: *tavā śriyo varshyasyeva vidyutaḥ|* Also see RV, 10.91.5.
322. RV, VIII.102.9: *ayam viśvā abhi śriyo'-gnirdeveshu patyate|*
323. RV, II.10.1: (*agniḥ*) *śriyamvasānaḥ|*
324. RV, V.57.6: *viśvā vaḥ śrīradhi tanūshu pipiśe|*
325. RV, II.33.3: *śreshṭho jātasya rudra śriyasi|*
326. RV, VI.48.19: *paro hi martyairasi samo devairuta śriyā|*
327. RV, VI.64.1: *ud u śriya ushaso rochamānā|*
328. RV, III.44.2: *vardhasa indra viśvā abhi śriyaḥ|*
329. RV, VIII.92.20: *yasmin viśvā adhi śriyoḥ|*
330. RV, IX.102.4: *jajñānaṁ sapta mātaro vedhāmaśāsata śriye|*
331. VS, 31.22=*Kāṇva* 35.22.
332. See below.
333. See the translation by Eggeling, Vol. V (Oxford, 1900), pp. 62-65.
334. Op. cit., p. 223.
335. *Jaiminīya Up. Br.* 4.11.1 ff.
336. Ibid. 4.11.2: . . . *māṁśriyaṁ upādhyam iti.*
337. *Jaimi. Brāhmaṇa* I.271 (p. 213 of the edn. by Raghuvira and Lokesh Chandra): *ya āsāṁ śriyaṁ upāste kiṁ sa bhavatīti| yasminn evārdhe bhavati tasya śreshṭho bhavatyapye-naṁ rājāno'dhastād upāsata iti|*
338. In the epic period we find that honouring by the goddess Śrī-Lakshmī of a male deity had come to signify elevation in his rank. See my *Skanda-Kārttikeya* (Varanasi, 1967), pp. 27-28.
339. ŚB, 11.1.6.23; *Ait. Br.* 8.5.
340. *Gopatha Br.* I.5.20; II.1.19; *Kaush. Br.* 1.1; 2.3; ŚB, 11.4.3.18.
341. ŚB, 4.1.3.9.
342. *Śrīrdevāḥ*, ŚB, 2.1.4.9.
343. ŚB, 8.3.2.13; 9.2.3.40; 11.4.3.18.
344. ŚB, 1.8.1.36; *Tāṇḍya Br.* 13.2.2; *Gopatha Br.* I.5.4; II.1.19.
345. ŚB, 13.2.6.7; *Tait. Br.* 3.9.4.7-8.
346. *Jaimi. Br.* III.15; III.152: *tadetachchhrīssavas sāma| aśnute śriyaṁ gachchhati rājyaṁ ya evaṁ veda|*

347. *Supra.*
348. See above.
349. RV, 10.71.2: *saktumiva titauna punanto yatra dhīrā manasā vāchamakrata| . . . bhadraishāṁ lakshmīrnihitādhi vāchi||*
350. R.T.H. Griffith, *The Hymns of the Atharvaveda*, Vol. I (Benares, 1916), p. 22; see also Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharvaveda* (SBE, XLII), pp. 109, 261.
351. Op. cit., p. 216.
352. The Śatarudriya Hymn of the *Yajurveda*, XVI.
353. AV, I.18.1.
354. *Supra.*
355. AV, I.18.4.
356. Some scholars would regard these names to simply denote different entities. However, it seems better to take them as individual names of the evil spirits, grouped together under Lakshmī and counted in all as hundred and one (as given in AV, VII.115.3) Lakshmīs or her diverse aspects. Further it may be noted that majority of these names were originally derived from certain marks or characteristic symbols (i.e. *lakshma-*, justifying their *lakshmī*, or 'possessor of a *lakshma*', nature). For example, Rshyapadī would have for her rudimentary motif an antelope, or better an antelope's horn; Vṛshadatī, a bullock-tooth; Goshedhā, a cow's tail (according to Weber); etc.
357. RV, X.71.2.
358. AV, VII.115.4; XII.5.6; ŚB, 8.4.4.8; 8.4.4.11; 8.5.4.3; *Ait. Br.* 2.40.
359. AV, VII.115.3.
360. AV, XI.7.17, where Lakshmī is mentioned with such good entities as Rta, Satya, Tapas, Rāshṭra, Vīrya, Bala etc. *Tait. Saṁ.* 2.1.5.2, where by Lakshmī are won cattle. ŚB, 14.9.3.8, where Lakshmī is invoked along with Agni, Soma, Tejas, Śrī, Savitā, Sarasvatī, Prajāpati and Viśvedevas.
361. AV, VII.115.1.4; *Mantra Br.* 1.4.5.
362. AV, VII.115.3.
363. Alluded to in AV, I.18.3.
364. *Paippalāda Saṁ.* 16.149.6; *Sāmavidhāna Br.* 3.1.5-7; *Śrīsūkta*, stanzas 5, 6, 8.
365. Also its repetitions; see above.
366. ŚB, 14.9.38=*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* 6.3.3. But in the Kāṇva text some ten *svāhākāras* are not given; hence its doubtful antiquity.
367. AV, XII.5.1 and 5.
368. *Sāṁ. Vidh. Br.* 3.1.3-7.
369. Gonda, op. cit., p. 213.
370. For example, in *Mānava Gṛhyasūtra*, Shashṭhī Kalpa (2.13).
371. *Bṛhaddevatā* 5.91, mentioning it as a benediction (*āśīrvāda*).
372. *Ṛgvidhāna* 2.17.6 ff; refer Gonda, op. cit., p. 214, and his edition of the *Ṛgvidhāna* (Utrecht, 1951).
373. For their date, M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I (Trans., Calcutta, 1927), pp. 286-7.
374. *Sūktaṁ pañchadaśarcham cha śrīkāmaḥ satataṁ japet|*
375. Verses 5, 6.
376. Verse 8.
377. *Kshutpipāsāmalāṁ jyeshthāmalakshmīṁ nāśayamyaham|abhūtimasamṛddhiṁ cha sarvāṁ nurṇuda me gṛhāt||*
378. Verse 6.
379. Verse 12. Also verse 3: '*śrīrmā devī*'.
380. Verse 9.
381. Verse 9.
382. Verse 5.
383. Verse 5; cp. the description of Śrī in ŚB 11.4.3.1.
384. Verses 11, 12-13; also verse 1: *suvarṇarajatasrajām.*
385. Verse 5; its variant is '*padmanemi*',
386. Verse 13. From *pushkara*=lotus.
387. Verse 4.
388. Verse 1; for *hiraṇmayī* also verses 13, 14.
389. Verse 4.
390. Verse 14.
391. Verse 1.
392. Verse 14; this seems similar to calling her *padminī*, or later on *padmā*, from lotus.
393. *Indian Art* (Varanasi, 1965), p. 81.
394. 2.17.6 ff; Gonda, op. cit., p. 214.
395. We have such ancient gold leafs discovered from Lauria Nandangarh and Piprahwa, which show the figure of a standing nude goddess, who was later adapted in iconography to portray Śrī-Lakshmī (with her distinct symbols like lotus or *abhisheka* by elephants) on Stūpa railings, cave facades and stone tablets.
396. *Indian Art*, p. 81.
397. Verses 1, 5, and 13.
398. Verse 14; cp. *ādityavarṇā* in verse 6.
399. Verse 6: *vanaspatistava vṛksho'tha bilvaḥ.*
400. Verses 4, 13, 14.
401. Verse 9.
402. Ibid.
403. Verse 11: *kardamena prajā bhūtā.*

404. Verse 12: *āpaḥ srajanti snigdhāni chiklīta* . . .
405. From root *klid* 'to moisten'.
406. Thus evidently referring to Śrī as a guardian deity of the farmer. See Gonda, op. cit., pp. 213-4.
407. Verse 10.
408. Verses 1 ff; 13 ff.
409. The term specifically occurs in the places where the god Agni is implored to bring the goddess.
410. ŚB, 2.1.1.7: *purīshya iti vai tāmāhuryaḥ śriyaṁ gachchhati.*
411. See above.
412. 4.2.1: *Goshṭho vai namaishā lakshmīḥ.*
413. See above.
414. ŚB 13.2.6.7; *Tait. Br.* 3.9.4.7.
415. Namely, Patna, Basarh, Rajghat, Kosam, Bhita, Sankisa, Mathura, Rupar, Taxila etc. See *Indian Art*, pp. 77 ff.
416. Ibid., p. 81.
417. Ibid., p. 82.
418. Op. cit., pp. 222 f.
419. Op. cit., pp. 222-3.
420. From Purusha (the primeval Being) was born Virāj and from Virāj (i.e. through their union), the evolved Being as (Vairāja) Purusha.
421. *Śrīr vai virāṭ*; *Śrīr-virāṭ*; ŚB, 11.4.3.18; *Gopatha Br.* I.5.4; I.5.20; II.1.19; II.6.15; *Kaushītaki Br.* 1.1; 2.3; 12.2; 15.5; etc. Also treated in detail by Gonda, op. cit., 187.
422. Virāj alone as the wife of Purusha: ŚB, 14.6.11.3; also see Petersberg *Lexicon*, *virāj* (3).
423. ŚB, 11.4.3.1.
424. No doubt rejecting the incest myth of daughter-wife as also in other cases; e.g., Prajāpati is both the begetter (ŚB 7.3.1.20) and husband of the Earth (ŚB 14.1.2.11); Rudra and his sister-wife *Ambikā* (*infra*).
425. *Virāḍ diśāṁ vishṇupatnī*, 22.13.
426. *Hrīścha te lakshmīścha patnyau*, 3.13.2.
427. ŚB, 14.4.3.9 (=*Bṛhad. Up.* 1.5.3); *Tait. Up.* 1.11; *Mait. Up.* 6.30; *Mantra Br.* 2.4.5; *Tait. Ār.* 4.42.5; 7.11.3.
428. VS, 24.35=*Mait. S.* 3.14.16, but reading *śalpaka.*
429. *Mānava GS* 2.13.6.
430. Jātaka No. 535: Hiri (Hrī) as the guardian goddess of the north, and regarded superior to Siri (Śrī), Saddhā (Śraddhā) and Āsā (Āśā), and pre-eminent among all divinities (*hiriyaṁ devesu hi seṭṭhasammatā*, Gāthā 94).
431. *Tait. Saṁ.* 2.4.6.2: *vāg vai sinīvālī pushṭiḥ.*
432. *Taitti. Br.* 2.5.7.4; also ŚB 11.4.3.16.
433. *Pushṭir vai pūshā*; ŚB, 3.1.4.9; *Taitti. Br.* 2.7.2.1; *Mait. Saṁ.* 4.2.10; 4.3.8; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 31.1; 37.7.
434. E.W. Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 199.
435. *Mānava GS* 2.13.6.
436. *Pāraskara GS* 2.17.9.
437. AV, XII.1.63: *śriyā mā dhehi bhūtyā.*
438. VS, XII.65: *namo bhūtyai yedaṁ chakāra.*
439. Translation from Eggeling, *The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Part III (Oxford, 1894), p. 324.
440. VS, 23.18: *sastyaśvakaḥ subhadrikāṁ kāmpīlavāsinīm.*
441. *Indische Studien*, Vol. I, p. 183.
442. *Mantra Br.* 2.6.2.
443. RV, V.51.14.
444. *Gopatha Br.* II.2.9: *pathyā pūshṇaḥ patnī.*
445. ŚB, 3.2.3.8; 4.5.1.4; *Kaush. Br.* 7.6.
446. ŚB, 3.2.3.15; see also *Kaush. Br.* 7.6.
447. *Ait. Br.* 1.7; also see *Kaush. Br.* 7.6 f.
448. *Mantra Br.* 2.6.2.
449. RV, X.151.1-5.
450. ŚB, 12.7.3.11: *śraddhā vai sūryasya duhitā.* For the daughter of the sun (*sūryasya duhitā*) also VS, 19.4.
451. *Taitti. Br.* 2.3.10.1.
452. *Taitti. Br.* 2.8.8.8.
453. *Jaimi. Br.* 2.426: *esha ha vai devānāṁ rājñī yachchraddhā.*
454. TA, 3.9.2.
455. *Tait. Br.* 3.12.3.2.
456. *Sā no jushāṇopa yajñam āgāt kāmavatsāmṛtaṁ duhānā śraddhā devī prathamajā ṛtasya viśvasya bhartrī jagataḥ pratishṭhā tāṁ śraddhām havishā yajāmahe sā no lokam amṛtaṁ dadhātu īśānā devī bhuvanasyādhipatnī* . . . Its translation is after Gonda, *Change and Continuity in Indian Religion* (The Hague, 1965), p. 143.
457. AV, XV.2.5: *śraddhā puṁśchalī mitro māgadhah.*
458. VS, XXX.5; but here the form is *puṁśchalū*: '*kāmāya puṁśchalū*'.
459. D.R. Bhandarkar, *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*, pp. 42-43.
460. A.P. Karamarkar, *The Religions of India*, Vol. I (Lonavala, 1950), p. 21.
461. *Tāṇḍya Br.* 8.1.10; *Kaush. Br.* 27.1; TB, 3.4.1.1; 3.4.15.1; 3.8.4.2 etc.
462. Op. cit., p. 21.
463. RV, IV.57.6.
464. RV, IV.57.7; this meaning is according to

Professor H.H. Wilson.

465. *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads* (Cambridge, 1925), Vol. I, p. 186.
466. AV, III.17.8-9; see also VS, XII.70.
467. See Weber, *Indische Studien*, Vol. XVII, pp. 256 ff.
468. ŚB, 7.2.2.5; etc. Eggeling, op. cit., part III, pp. 226-7.
469. *Tait. Br.* 2.3.10.1.
470. *Jaimi. Up. Br.* 4.27.1-17.
471. ŚB, 3.3.4.18; *Shaḍviṁśa Br.* 1.1; *Jaimi. Br.* 2.79; *Taitti. Āraṇyaka* 1.12.4; also *Lāṭyāyana ŚS* 1.3.1.
472. *Pāraskara GS* 2.17.9: *indrapatnīmupahvaye sītām . . .*
473. Ibid. 2.17.1-19.
474. Keith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 366; see also H. Oldenberg, *The Gṛhya Sūtras*, Part I (*SBE*, Vol. XXIX), pp. 333-36.
475. *Gobhila GS* 4.4.28-30.
476. *Kaṭh. GS* 71.7; see also *Mānava GS* 2.10.7.
477. I.e., AV III.17.9; also in *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā* 16.12.149.
478. *Kauśika Sūtra*, 106.1-9.
479. For example, *Śaunakīya* recension, the *Paippalāda Saṁhitā*, the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*.
480. RV, II.32.6-8; X.184.2.
481. *Supra*.
482. *Paippalāda Saṁ*. 11.1.6: *sinīvālīṁ anumatīṁ rākāṁ guṅgūṁ sarasvatīm| devānāṁ patnī yā devīndrāṇīm avase huve||* The *Ṛgvedic* verse reads: *yā guṅūryā sinīvālī yā rākā yā sarasvatī| indrāṇīmahva ūtaye varuṇānīṁ svastaye||*
483. *Paipp. Saṁ.* 11.1.2: *dhātā te taṁ sinīvālī varuṇānī pra yachchhati| pumāṁsaṁ putram indrāṇī satatāyāṁ* (?) *dadhātu te||*
484. AV, VI.11.1-3.
485. *Indrāṇī varuṇānī sinīvāly utāditiḥ| marutarugrā patnīnāṁ* (?) *putram abhy anu deshṭu te||*
486. Like most of the portion of this Saṁhitā this stanza (9.10.9) is also much corrupt. However it reads: *ihendrāṇīṁ varuṇānīṁ sinīvālīṁ krakoshyāṁ* (?)| *gṛhān śūraputrān devaṁ yāchāmo vishadūshaṇam||*
487. Weber, *Indische Studien*, Vol. V, pp. 228 ff; Keith, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 199; *Ṛgveda Brāhmaṇas* (Cambridge, 1920), p. 297.
488. *Yā pūrvā paurṇamāsī sānumatiryottarā sā rākā yā pūrvāmāvāsyā sā sinīvālī yottarā sā kuhūḥ*. *Gopatha Br.* II.1.10; *Shaḍviṁśa Br.* 4.6; *Aitareya Br.* 7.11; *Mait. Saṁ.* 4.3.5; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 12.8.
489. *Ait. Br.* 3.47.
490. ŚB, 9.5.1.38; *Ait. Br.* 3.47; *Mait. Saṁ.* 4.3.5; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 12.8; *Taitt. Saṁ.* 3.4.9.6.
491. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 3.4.9.1 ff.
492. Keith, *Translation of Taittirīya Saṁhitā* (Cambridge, 1914), Vol. I, pp. 273-4.
493. *Tait. Saṁ.* 3.4.9.1: *prathamam dhātāraṁ karoti mithunī eva tena karotyanveyāsmā anumatirmanyate rāte rākā pra sinīvālī janayati prajāsveva prajātāsu kuhvā vāchaṁ dadhati.* Also *Tait. Br.* 1.7.2.1.
494. *Kāṭhaka Saṅkalana* 23.6 (edn. by Suryakanta, Lahore, 1943).
495. *ekā kalodaśishyata tāṁ prajāpatiḥ sinīvālyā adadat tayeha paśushu vanaspatishvoshadhīshu chāmāvāsadyadamāvasat tadamāvasyāyā amāvāsyatvam.*
496. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 3.4.9.6: *amāvāsyā sinīvālī.*
497. Ibid.; Keith, *Translation*, Vol. I, p. 274.
498. *Paipp. Saṁ.* 2.25.5.
499. AV, VII.46.1-3; its first two stanzas are from RV, II.32.6-7.
500. For this meaning of the epithet '*viśpatnī*', see Gonda, op. cit., p. 226.
501. Ibid., p. 228.
502. AV, VII.46.3: *vishṇoḥ patnī . . . patiṁ devī rādhase chodayasva.*
503. AV, II.26.2; *Paipp. Saṁ.* 2.12.2.
504. *Ait. Br.* 3.48: *yā gauḥ sā sinīvālī.*
505. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 5.6.18.1: *trayonaḍvāhassinīvālyai.* Also *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 49.8.
506. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 5.5.17.1
507. Given in most of the Gṛhyasūtras.
508. AV, XIV.2.15, 21.
509. *Mānava GS* 2.18.2; *Kauśika S* 35.5; *Mantra Br.* 1.4.7; *Bṛhad. Up.* 6.4.21; etc.
510. *Bṛhad. Up.* 6.2.21 (=ŚB 14.9.4.20).
511. RV, II.32.6 (AV, VII.46.1; VS, 34.10; *Taitt. Saṁ.* 3.1.11.3-4).
512. *Mantra Br.* 2.6.2.
513. See above.
514. ŚB, 6.5.1 10.
515. *Sinīvālī sukapardā sukurīrā svaupaśeti, yoshā vai sinīvālyetadu vai yoshāyai smṛddharūpam yatsukapardā sukurīrā svaupaśā samardhayatyevaināmetatsā tubhyamadite mahyokhāṁ dadhātu . . .* Translation by Eggeling, Part III, p. 232.
516. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 2.4.6.2; also ŚB 6.5.1.9 (*vāg vai sinīvālī*).
517. *Paipp. Saṁ.* 6.6.7.
518. *Nirukta* 11.31: *sinamannaṁ bhavati, sināti*

bhūtāni, vālaṁ—parva, vṛṇotestasminnannavatī, vālinī vā etc.

519. *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 12.8.
520. *Paipp. Saṁ.* 12.6.12.
521. Ibid. 5.26.5.
522. See above.
523. RV, X.59.6; X.167.3.
524. *The Religion and Philosophy in the Veda and Upanishads*, Vol. I, p. 211.
525. See above.
526. Keith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 341; see ŚB 5.2.3.2 f.
527. *Mait. Saṁ.* 4.3.1: *ye'rātīyanti sā nirṛtirye nārātīyanti sā'numatiḥ*; also *anumatyā ashṭakapālena pracharanti, nirṛtimeva niravadāya*, ibid.
528. AV, I.18.2.
529. Ibid.
530. AV, V.7.1-10.
531. AV, V.7.4.
532. AV, VI.131.2.
533. VS, XXXIV.8-9.
534. AV, VI.11.3.
535. AV, VII.21.1-6.
536. AV, VII.21.6.
537. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 3.3.11.3-4; also see AV, VII. 25.1.
538. ŚB, 5.2.3.2; *Mait. Saṁ.* 2.6.1; *Taitt. Saṁ.* 1.8.1.1.
539. VS, XXIV.32; *Mait. Saṁ.* 3.14.13; also see *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 47.7 (with certain variants); *Taitt. Saṁ.* 5.5.17.1.
540. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 1.8.1.1; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 15.1.
541. ŚB, 5.2.3.2.
542. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 3.3.11.4: *yasyāmidaṁ pradiśi yadvirochate'numatiṁ prati bhūshantyāyavaḥ| yasyā upastha urvantarikshaṁ sā no devī suhavā śarma yachchhatu||*
543. *The Veda of the Black Yajus School*, Part I, p. 265.
544. *Supra.*
545. ŚB, 5.2.3.4; *Taitt. Br.* 1.6.1.1; 1.6.1.4; *Mait. Saṁ.* 4.3.8.
546. *Ait. Br.* 3.48.
547. *Taitt. Āra.* 3.9.2.
548. According to the *Śāṅkhāyana GS* 2.14.4.
549. *Pāraskara GS* 2.13.2.
550. See Keith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 372.
551. RV, V.42.12.
552. AV, VII.48.1-2; *Taitt. Saṁ.* 3.3.11.5; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 13.16.
553. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 3.4.9.1; *Taitt. Br.* 1.7.2.1. Also *Nirukta* XI.30.
554. *Paipp. Saṁ.* 11.1.5: *tvashṭā piṁśatu te prajāṁ dhātā tokaṁ dadhātu te| rākā sīvyachcha sūchyā bhūtasyeśānā bhuvanasya devī||*
555. *Ait. Br.* 3.37.
556. Keith, *Ṛgveda Brāhmaṇas*, pp. 187-8.
557. *Śāṅkhāyana ŚS* 1.15.3.
558. *Bhāradvāja ŚS* 4.19.4; C.G. Kashikar, *Sūtras of Bhāradvāja*, Part II, p. 98.
559. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 3.4.9.1; also *Taitt. Br.* 1.7.2.1.
560. *Supra.*
561. AV, VII.47.1-2; repeated in some cases with variants in *Taitt. Saṁ.* 3.3.11.5; *Mait. Saṁ.* 4.12.6; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 13.16; *Āśvalāyana* (1.10.8); *Śāṅkhāyana* (9.28.3) *Śrautasūtras*; etc.
562. AV, VII.47.2.
563. *Bhāradvāja ŚS* 4.19.4.
564. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 3.4.9.1.
565. AV, VII.79.1-4 and VII.80.1-4.
566. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 3.4.9.6: *amāvāsyā sinīvālī paurṇamāsyanumatiḥ.*
567. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 2.5.6.4: *nā'māvāsyāyāṁ cha paurṇamāsyāṁ cha striyamupeyād, yadyupeyānnirindriyaḥ syāt.*
568. AV, XIX.7.2-5.
569. See also *Taittirīya Saṁ.* 4.4.10.1-3; *Taitt. Br.* 1.5.1.1-5; *Mait. Saṁ.* 1.13.20; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 39.13; etc. For other reference see Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, pp. 412 ff.
570. *Mait. Saṁ.* 2.2.7.
571. *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 11.3.
572. *Prajāpatirvai somāya rājñe duhitṛīradadāu nakshatrāṇi.*
573. *Taitt. Āraṇ.* 3.9.2.
574. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 2.3.5.1-2; similar story in *Mait. Saṁ.* 2.2.7; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 11.3.
575. AV, XIII.1.22-3.
576. *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 228.
577. AV, IX.7.3.
578. ŚB, 3.8.1.12; *Jaimi. Br.* 2.1.
579. *Tāṇḍya Br.* 16.5.19; 16.5.27.
580. *Taitt. Br.* 3.2.8.2; *Tāṇḍya Br.* 7.9.20; 13.9.16; 13.10.5.
581. *Tāṇḍya Br.* 13.9.17.
582. *Ait. Br.* 2.16.
583. *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 39.13; *Taitt. Saṁ.* 4.4.10.3; *Mait. Saṁ.* 2.13.20; *Taitt. Br.* 1.5.1.5.
584. *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 7.7; 11.2; 26.7; *Taitt. Saṁ.* 1.5.8.2; *Mait. Saṁ.* 3.9.6; *Jaimi. Br.* 3.131; 3.213; 3.250; ŚB, 2.3.4.26; 3.7.3.17.
585. RV, V.51.14; AV, III.4.7; also see RV, X. 86.13 where Vṛshākapāyī is called Revatī.

586. *Mantra Br*. 2.6.2.
587. *Śāṅkhāyana GS* 1.26.26; 3.10.1; 3.11.2; *Kāṭhaka GS* 41.5; *Mānava GS* 2.10.7.
588. *Taitt. Br*. 1.1.2.1.
589. *Prajāpatervā etachachhiro yat krittikāḥ*, *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 8.1; *Kapishṭhala Saṁ*. 6.6.
590. *Agnirdevatā Kṛttikā nakshatram*, *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 39.13; also *Taitt. Saṁ*. 4.4.10.1; *Mait. Saṁ*. 2.13.20; *Taitt. Br*. 1.1.2.1; 3.1.1.1; etc.
591. ŚB, 2.1.2.5.
592. *Taitt. Br*. 3.1.4.1: *agnaye svāhā kṛttikābhyaḥ svāhā, ambāyai svāhā dulāyai svāhā nitatnyai svāhā'bhrayanyai svāhā meghayantyai svāhā varshayantyai svāhā chupuṇikāyai svāheti*.
593. *Taitt. Saṁ*. 4.5.5.1.
594. *Mait. Saṁ*. 2.8.13.
595. *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 40.4.
596. AV, VI.136.1-3; VI.137.1-3.
597. *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p. 415.
598. *Sapta* (*vai*) *Kṛttikāḥ*, *Mait. Saṁ*. 1.6.9; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 8.1; *Kapishṭhala Saṁ*. 6.6; and see the seven names in *Taitt. Br*. 3.1.4.1.
599. ŚB, 2.1.2.2.
600. ŚB, 2.1.2.4: *ṛkshāṇām ha va eta agre patnya āsuḥ saptarshīnu ha sma vai purarkshā ityāchakshate tā mithunena vyārdhyanami hyuttarāhi saptarshaya udyanti pura etā asamiva vai tadyo mithunena vyṛddhaḥ sa nenmithunena vyṛddhyā iti tasmānna kṛttikāsvādadhīta*.
601. *Mait. Saṁ*. 2.9.1-2. Such *Gāyatrīs* are conspicuously absent in other extant Saṁhitās of the *Black Yajurveda*, i.e. *Taittirīya* and *Kāṭhaka*. But they are found in the apocryphal chapter of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (10.15; also its *Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad*), which is in date not much earlier than the 3rd cent. B.C.
602. *Tatkumārāya Vidmahe kārttikeyāya dhīmahi| tanno skandaḥ prachodayāt||*
603. *AV Pariśishṭa* 20.2.9; 20.6.4; 20.6.5.
604. See my *Skanda-Kārttikeya—a study in the origin and development* (Varanasi, 1967), pp. 25 ff.
605. See E.W. Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, pp. 227 ff.
606. *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 157.
607. AV, XV.16.2.
608. AV, III.10.1, 2; also verse 8, where the Year is called her lord and consort.
609. AV, III.X.13.
610. AV, III.X.12; also see *Taitt. Saṁ*. 4.3.11.3 (=*Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 39.10); cp. *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 13.3.
611. *Taitt. Saṁ*. 7.4.8.1; also *Tāṇḍya Br*. 5.9.2.
612. *Mantra Br*. 2.2.16; 2.2.18.
613. *Taitt. Saṁ*. 5.7.2.2.
614. ŚB, 6.2.2.23.
615. *Tāṇḍya Br*. 10.3.11.
616. Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras* (Delhi, 1959), p. 415; V.M. Apte, *Social and Religious Life in the Gṛhya Sūtras* (Bombay, 1954), p. 245.
617. Ibid., pp. 246, 247.
618. Keith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 428.
619. See Keith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 429, but he has taken, following Oldenberg (*SBE*, 39, pp. 208-9), '*strībhyaḥ*' for the wives of the Fathers. However, see D.D. Kosambi, *Myth and Reality* (Bombay, 1959), p. 84.
620. Apte, op. cit., p. 161.
621. Ram Gopal, op. cit., p. 410.
622. RV, X.127.1-8.
623. RV, X.127.8.
624. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 124.
625. AV, XIX.47, 48, 49 and 50.
626. VS, 34.32.
627. *Nirukta* 9.29.
628. In one *Rātrī-Sūkta* appended after RV, X. 127 hymn.
629. See Yāska (2.2.20) according to whom *kṛshṇa* in RV I.8.1 is the epithet of Rātrī.
630. AV, XIX.47.2.
631. AV, XIX.49.7.
632. AV, XIX.47.1.
633. Stanza 13: *ya imaṁ durgāstavaṁ puṇyaṁ rātraurātrau sadā paṭhet*.
634. Stanza 3: *rātrīṁ pra padye jananīṁ sarvabhūtaniveśanīm| bhadrāṁ bhagavatīṁ kṛshṇāṁ viśvasya jagato niśām||*
635. Stanza 4.
636. Stanza 5; etc.
637. AV, XIX.50.2.
638. See below.
639. *Sāmavidhāna Br*. 3.8.2 ff.
640. Or 'kills the demons', according to Sāyaṇa.
641. See AV, XI.2.12.
642. ŚB, 6.7.3.8; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 24.5.
643. *Mānava GS* 2.13.1-10.
644. *Puṇyā, yaśasvinī, viśvarūpā, devī*.
645. Verses b-e.

646. Gonda, op. cit., p. 218.
647. P.K. Agrawala, *Skanda-Kārttikeya*, p. 35.
648. *Kāṭhaka GS* 19.7.
649. *Baudhāyana GS* 3.7.13.
650. *Agniveśya GS* 2.6.3.26; *Śaṅkhalikhita DS*, Kane's edn., p. 21; *Baudhayana DS* 2.5.9.8; also *Baudhāyaṇa Par*. 4.2.
651. See my *Skanda-Kārttikeya*, pp. 34, 35, 41, 67, etc.
652. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 120.
653. AV, I.31.2.
654. AV, II.10.1-8.
655. AV, II.25.1.
656. AV, IV.36.10.
657. AV, XVI.8.2; XIX.44.4; VS, XII.65.
658. AV, V.7.9; also see XIV.2.19.
659. AV, V.7.1-10.
660. AV, I.18.1.
661. M. Bloomfield, *The Atharvaveda and the Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* (Strassburg, 1899), p. 84.
662. AV, XI.8.19: *svapno vai tandrīr nirṛtiḥ papmāno nāma devatāḥ*.
663. ŚB, 7.2.1.1.
664. AV, XVI.5.2.
665. AV, VI.27.1; also AV, VI.28.1.
666. AV, VII.64.2. Cp. *Mait. Saṁ*. 4.3.8, where *śyenī* is her form. See also *Ait. Br*. 2.15.
667. VS, XXX.9.
668. *Mait. Saṁ*. 3.14.19: *kapota, ulūkaḥ śaśaste nirṛtyai*.
669. *Taitt. Āra*. 3.10.3.
670. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, pp. 327 ff; Keith, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 266-67.
671. Ibid., p. 279; also pp. 266-67.
672. *Mait. Saṁ*. 3.6.3: *trayā vai nairṛta, akshāḥ striyaḥ svapnaḥ*.
673. Keith, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 212.
674. Ibid., p. 212.
675. VS, XII.62-65; *Taitt. Saṁ*. 4.2.5.3-4; *Mait. Saṁ*. 2.7.12; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 16.12; *Kapishṭhala Saṁ*. 25.3.
676. See *Taitt. Saṁ*. 4.2.4.2-4; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 20.2; *Mait. Saṁ*. 3.2.4; *Kapishṭhala Saṁ*. 32.4; ŚB, 7.2.1.1 ff.
677. VS, XII.62: *asunvantamayajamānamichchha stenasyetyāmanvihi taskarasya*.
678. Translation from Keith, *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, Vol. 2, p. 315.
679. ŚB, 7.2.1.10, *ghorā vai nirṛtiḥ*; ŚB, 7.2.1.1, *papmā vai nirṛtiḥ*.
680. *Mait. Saṁ*. 4.3.1: *ardhaṁ vai purushasya nirṛtigrihītamardhamanirṛtigrihītam*.
681. *Mait. Saṁ*. 2.5.5.
682. *Mait. Saṁ*. 2.2.1: *nirṛtigṛhito vā esha yo niruddhaḥ*.
683. ŚB, 5.3.1.13: *yā vā'aputrā patnī sā nirṛti-gṛhītā*.
684. ŚB, 5.3.1.13.
685. Ibid.
686. *Taitt. Saṁ*. 5.7.13.1; *Kath. Saṁ*. 53.3; also *Mait. Saṁ*. 3.15.2.
687. Keith, *Rel. and Phil. of the Veda and Upa.*, Vol. II, p. 341; J.C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration* (The Hague, 1957), pp. 15 ff.
688. *Taitt. Saṁ*. 4.2.5.3-4; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 16.12; ŚB, 7.2.1.11.
689. Heesterman, op. cit., p. 17.
690. ŚB, 7.2.1.1-18.
691. *Taitt. Ār*. 1.28.1: *viśīrshṇī gṛdhraśīrshṇī cha apeto nirṛtiṁ hatha, paribādham śveta-kukshaṁ nijaṅghaṁ*.
692. See above.
693. See Pl. XXI, A, in *Indian Archaeology 1968-69—A Review*; Sankalia, *Prehistory and Protohistory of India and Pakistan*, new edn., 1974, p. 488.
694. *Mait. Saṁ*. 2.13.20; also see *Taitt. Br*. 1.5.1.4.
695. However, see *Tait. Br*. 1.2.2-3, where it is asked to be rendered auspicious.
696. *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 9.16; 20.2; *Mait. Saṁ*. 3.2.4; *Taitt. Br*. 1.6.1.3.
697. *Mānava ŚS* 11.2.13. Translated by Miss J.M. van Gelder, New Delhi, 1963, p. 316. But she has failed to understand the text and wrongly translated the whole section by taking *mūla* to mean "root". Its presiding deity worshipped principally in the ritual is Nirṛti.
698. RV VIII.59.12: *trayambakaṁ yajāmahe sugandhiṁ pushṭivardhanam| urvārukamiva bandhanānmṛtyor mukshīya māmṛtat||*
699. VS, III.60: its second line repeating the first line with some change; *Taitt. Saṁ*. 1.8.6.2: same as in RV; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 9.7: reading *rayiposhaṇam* instead of *pushṭivardhanam*; *Mait. Saṁ*. 1.10.4: same as in RV; *Kapishṭhala Saṁ*. 8.11: as in *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*.; AV has an altogether changed version, replacing *tryambakam* by *aryamaṇam*, and uses it in the context of marriage.
700. *Taitt. Saṁ*. 1.8.6.1-2; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ*. 9.7, *Mait. Saṁ*. 1.10.4; *Kapishṭhala Saṁ*. 8.11.
701. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 74; Keith, op. cit;

Vol. I, p. 143.

702. VS, II.60; see also *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 36.14; *Mait. Saṁ.* 1.10.20.

703. VS, III.57; *Taitt. Saṁ.* 1.8.6.1-2; etc.

704. ŚB, 2.6.204-17.

705. ŚB, 2.6.2.9: *ambikā ha vai nāmāsya svasā tasyāsyaisha saha bhāgastadyadasyaisha striyā saha bhāgastasmāttryambakāḥ nāma.*

706. AV, XIV.1.17.

707. VS, III.57 ff.

708. VS, III.60.

709. VS, III.57: *esha te rudra bhāgah saha svasrāmbikayā taṁ jushasva svāhaisha te rudra bhāga ākhuste paśuḥ.*

710. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 1.8.6.2: *avāmba rudramadimahyava devaṁ tryambakam| yathā naḥ śreyasaḥ karadyathā no vasyasaḥ karadyathā naḥ paśumataḥ karadyathā no vyavasāyayāt||*

711. *Striyā saha bhāgastasmāttryambakaḥ nāma,* ŚB, 2.6.2.9.

712. Ernst Arbman, *Rudra*, pp. 295 ff.

713. *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 36.14: *tryambakaṁ yajāmaha iti parīyanti. yā patikāmā syāt sāpi parīyāt, pativedanamevāsyai kurvanti . . . bhagamevāsyai samāvapanti.*

714. ŚB, 2.6.2.13 f.

715. ŚB, 2.6.2.13: *tadu hāpi kumāryaḥ parīyuḥ, bhagasya bhajāmahā iti yā ha vai sā rudrasya svasāmbikā nāma sa ha vai bhagasyeshṭe tasmadu hapi kumaryah parīyurbhagasya bhajāmahā iti.*

716. ŚB, 2.6.2.13, *Translation*, Vol. I, p. 441.

717. *Mait. Saṁ.* 1.10.20: *ambī vai bhaganāmnī, tasmāt tryambakāḥ.*

718. *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 36.14.

719. *Kapishṭhala Saṁ.* 8.10: *bhago'si bhagasya te lapsīya.* The *Kāṭhaka* version (9.7) has: *bhagastha bhagasya vo lapsīya.*

720. RV, I.164.40; see also *Ait. Br.* 1.22 on it.

721. *Paipp. Saṁ.* 2.66.2.

722. See AV, II.8.1; VI.121.3.

723. As an address to a woman, see ŚB, 1.8.1.9.

724. Rātrī-sūkta, verse 3.

725. *Mait. Saṁ.* 1.10.20: *śaradvai rudrasya yoniḥ svasāmbikā.*

726. *Mait. Saṁ.* 1.10.20; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 36.14; also see *Taitt. Br.* 1.6.10.4.

727. ŚB, 2.6.2.4-17; also see *Taitt. Br.* 1.6.10; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 36.14; *Mait. Saṁ.* 1.10.20. And in the Sūtras, *Baudh. ŚS* 12.3; 5.16-17; *Āpastamba ŚS* 8.17.1-18.10; *Kātyā. ŚS* 5.10.2-21; *Lāṭyāyana ŚS* 5.3.5-11.

728. Keith, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 428.

729. Ibid., pp. 428-9.

730. Kosambi, *Myth and Reality*, pp. 83-84.

731. Ibid., p. 84.

732. *Supra.*

733. Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras*, p. 414.

734. Keith, op. cit., p. 429; V.M. Apte, *Social and Religious Life in the Gṛhyasūtras*, p. 247.

735. AV, XI.2.11.

736. AV, XI.2.31.

737. *Taitt. Āra.* 10.18. The *Gāyatrīs* dedicated to different deities occur in this text, roughly datable not much earlier to the 3rd cent. B.C.

738. *Mait. Saṁ.* 1.10.20.

739. Ibid., also *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 36.14.

740. The meaning of *ambaka* as 'eye' may also have a hint to an earlier or the primary sense of this word as 'womb', for the eye had been a concept in primitive religion interchangeable with the female *yoni.* The original meaning of the term *amba*, and also its variants, as *ambi*, *ambā*, may have been the female organ, connotated in a way analogous to the word *yoni*—'womb'< 'mother's womb'<'mother' or 'birthplace'.

741. RV, III.56.5.

742. RV, II.41.16; X.86.7; X.97.2; VS, VI.36; AV, XX.126.7; *Taitt. Saṁ.* 4.4.5.1; ŚB, 3.9.4.21; 6.4.4.7; etc.

743. VS, *Taitt. Saṁ.*, *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.*, *Mait. Saṁ.* loc. cit.

744. RV, I.23.16; AV, I.4.1; also RV, II.41.16.

745. RV, VIII.72.5; *Mait. Saṁ.* 1.10.20; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 36.14.

746. *Taitt. Saṁ.* 7.4.19.1-3; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 44.8; *Taitt. Br.* 3.9.6.3.

747. VS, 23.18; *Mait. Saṁ.* 3.12.20; ŚB, 13.2.8.3.

748. *Śānkh. Āra.* 3.3.

749. VS, XXIII.18; *Taitt. Saṁ.* 7.14.19.1-3 has *Ambā*, *Ambālī* and *Ambikā*; *Mait. Saṁ.* 3.12.20, *Ambī*, *Ambikā* and *Ambālikā.*

750. ŚB, 13.2.8.3; *Taitt. Br.* 3.9.6.3.

751. For example, the last part of VS, XXIII.18, saying that 'the horse will lie near the other woman Subhadrā who dwells in Kāmpila', is omitted in ŚB, 13.2.8.3.

752. *ŚB Translation*, Part V, p. 321, fn. 2.

753. Ibid., Keith, *Taitt. Saṁ. Translation*, Vol. II, p. 615, fn. 15.

754. *Indische Studien*, Vol. I, p. 183.

755. Ibid.

756. VS, XXIII.18: *ambe ambike'mbālike na*

mā nayati kaśchana, sasastyaśvakaḥ subhadrikāṁ kāmpīlavāsinīm.

757. Keith, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 144.
758. ŚB, 2.6.2.9.
759. *Mait. Saṁ.* 1.10.20; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 36.14.
760. See A.P. Karamarkar, *The Religions of India*, Vol. I, pp. 21, 96-7.
761. *Taitt. Āra.* 10.18: *namo hiraṇyabāhave hiraṇyapataye'ambikāpataya umāpataye namo namaḥ.*
762. Ibid., 10.1.7; 10.2.1.
763. Ibid., 10.1.7: *kātyāyanāya vidmahe kanyakumārī dhīmahi, tanno durgiḥ prachodayāt.*
764. Ibid., 10.34.1.
765. Ibid., 10.36.1.
766. Ibid., 10.42.1.
767. *Muṇḍ. Up.* 1.2.4.
768. *Kāṭhaka GS*, 19.7; *Śāṅkh. GS*, 2.14.14; *Kaushītaki GS*, 3.10.14.
769. In J. Muir's *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. IV (London, 1863), p. 361.
770. ŚB, 6.6.1.24.
771. *Prajāpatiryasyai yonirasrijyate tasyā umā ulvamāsañ chhaṇā jarāyu.* The translation given here is from Eggeling, pt. 3, p. 252.
772. This short Upanishad also forms part of the *Jaiminīya Up. Br.* (4.18-21).
773. Ibid.
774. Weber, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 183 ff; *ERE*, Vol. II (1909), p. 813; Keith, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 199-200; A.P. Karamarkar, op. cit., p. 100.
775. Keith, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 199-200.
776. G. Oppert, *Original Inhabitants of India*, p. 421; A.P. Karamarkar, op. cit., p. 101.
777. S. Chattopadhyay, *Theistic Sects in Ancient India* (Calcutta, 1962), p. 52.
778. *Jaim. GS* 2.9.14.
779. *AV Pariśishṭa* 40.4.3.
780. *Kāṭhaka GS*, 19.7.
781. See *Kaushītaki GS*, 3.10.14; *Śāṅkha. GS*, 2.14.14; *Vaikhā. GS*, 3.7.18.
782. *Mait. Saṁ.* 2.9.1: *tadgāṅgauchyāya vidmahe girisutāya dhīmahi, tanno gaurī prachodayāt.*
783. *Taitt. Āra.* 10.1.7: *kātyāyanāya vidmahe kanyakumārī dhīmahi, tanno durgiḥ prachodayāt.*
784. A.P. Karamarkar, op. cit., p. 99.
785. *Supra.*
786. *Baudh. GS* (Govt. Library, Mysore edn.), p. 269.
787. *Pāras. GS*, 3.8.
788. *Hiraṇ. GS*, 2.3.8.
789. *Śvet. Up.* 4.8-10.
790. AV, VIII.10.22.
791. Op. cit., p. 156.
792. RV, X.124.5; X.138.3.
793. *Sodakrāmatsāsurānāgachchhattāmasurā upāhvayanta māya ehīti| tasyā virochanaḥ prahrādirvatsa asidayaspātraṁ pātram| tāṁ dvimūrdhartvyodhoktāṁ māyāmevādhok| tāṁ māyāmasurā upa jīvantyupajīvaniyo bhavati ya evaṁ veda||*
794. VS, XI.69; on it ŚB, 6.6.2.6.
795. VS, XIII.18, 42, 43, 45, 50.
796. VS, XIII.44: *varūtrīṁ tvashṭurvarunasya nābhimaviṁ jajñānāṁ rajasaḥ parasmāt| mahīṁ sāhasrīmasurasya māyāmagne mā hiṁsīḥ parame vyoman||*
797. AV, VI.72.1; also *Kauśika Sūtra* 40.16-17.
798. *Ait. Br.* 2.22; see also *Tāṇḍya Br.* 13.9.
799. *Jaimi. Br.* 1.161-63; *Taṇḍya Br.* 13.9-10; *Kāṭhaka Saṁ.* 29.1; *Mait. Saṁ.* 3.10.6.
800. W. Caland, in his *Pañchaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa* (Calcutta, 1931), quotes on p. 329.
801. E.H. Johnston, "A terracotta figure at Oxford", *JISOA*, Vol. X, 1942, pp. 94-102.
802. *Ancient Indian Folk Cults* (Varanasi, 1970), pp. 150-53.
803. Ibid., p. 150.
804. *Śvet. Up.* 4.9-10.
805. See also Karamarkar, op. cit., pp. 96-7.
806. Ranade, *A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy* (Poona, 1926), pp. 226-28.

CONCLUSION

IN the preceding pages we have attempted to collect and sift, as far as possible objectively, the evidence for the worship of goddesses in Protohistoric and Vedic India. A goddess or mother-goddess is seen making her appearance in the form of clay statuettes in the Chalcolithic peasant-cultures of the Baluchistan foothills. Presumably a bull-cult was associated with her worship in these village-communities who seem to have relied for the source of their economy largely on agriculture. Her two aspects are probably discernible, the one terrific as presiding over death and other calamities, and the other gracious or benevolent as presiding over fertility and nourishment. The former aspect is represented by the figurines showing distinct goggle eyes and a tall headdress and the latter aspect specifically by those who hold babies or have their hand on the breast. In general this mother-goddess in her two forms seems to continue in the religion of the Indus civilisation. Her clay figurines are found in adequate number at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. Other types identified are as follows: (a) those in a state of pregnancy; (b) elaborately ornamented standing nude figurines, with detailed coiffure, necklace and girdle; in some cases having shell-like cups on either side of their head; (c) similar to *b*, but without the prominent fan-headdress; (d) the goddess with some queer object on the head, suggested to be the stylised rendering of a dove or a goat.

However, the anthropomorphic representations on characteristic Indus seals and sealings offer a debatable problem as to their correct identification as they are of very small size, and the legend on them still remains undeciphered. On the basis of several contextual points of the depiction and a careful study of the figures in question, it has been conceded that as a rule the standing figures may represent females and the seated ones a male deity (of which typical is the famous so-called "Paśupati" figure). This hypothesis is to some extent substantiated by a unique seal from Harappa on which both the seated and the standing figures appear side by side; this may lead us to the belief that they are depictions of two different deities. The standing figure appearing on a number of other seals invariably wears a pig-tail which probably characterises it to be a female representation.

As we come to the Vedic literature we are face to face with much valuable evidence as regards the goddess worship in the culture-phase of India's religious tradition represented by these texts. The earlier view has been that the goddesses find only very insignificant representation in the Ṛgvedic pantheon. But this belief needs to be revised. We have beyond doubt the great goddesses Aditi and Pṛthivī who are in ascendency even over the gods. Aditi, who personified the principle of freedom from bondage and sin, is quite frequently lauded as the Great Mother *par excellence*, being the arch-mother of all gods and cosmic phenomena. In particular she has been given the outstanding status of the mother of such great gods as Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Pūshā, etc. There appears to have already been developed in the *Ṛgveda* the notion of her privileged sonship being allotted only to certain specific gods; they are originally seven or eight, but subsequently the number seems to have been raised to twelve as to allow entry in this class of Āditya Gods to Vishṇu and others, who acquire significant status thereby in the pantheon. Similarly the great goddess Pṛthivī, the personified Earth, is celebrated as the mother of gods, all vegetation and men. But this function is given to her in the beginning often with her pair Dyaus. Her glorification in an Atharvavedic hymn is of outstanding value and has been discussed in detail. Other dominant fertility goddesses include the Āpaḥ (personified Waters). Sarasvatī (the river of that name and Speech), Sinīvālī (personification of a lunar phase), etc. Besides them, a triad of the goddesses Iḷā, Sarasvatī and Bhāratī finds exclusive invocation in the Āprī Hymns of the *Ṛgveda*.

The same classification holds good for the later Vedic goddesses, and besides the old ones a number of new names appear in this period. It is noteworthy that the evidence discussed for this period is quite extensive and covers the religious evolution from later Saṁhitās to the Gṛhyasūtras. Though in earlier part of this period in most of the cases the Ṛgvedic goddesses continue to enjoy an eminent status in the pantheon, in the later development certain goddesses who make comparatively late appearance in the Vedic religion seem to rapidly gain eminence over the old ones. For example, Śrī-Lakshmī and Ambikā are the goddesses who find ascendency in this period. For the most part this seems to have been owing to a syncretistic tendency on the part of their followers who identified several folk goddesses of a like nature under one eminent eclectic divinity. The same phenomenon possibly was at work in making such male deities as Vishṇu and Rudra eminent over the comparatively more ancient gods like Varuṇa, Indra and Agni. We already find in the late Upanishads such as the *Śvetāśvatara* early foundations of the metaphysical theories about Śakti or Supreme Divine Energy and the world-appearance or *māyā*. The closing phase of the Vedic period is generally thought to be represented in the Sūtra literature. At this stage of development we are practically on the threshold of full-fledged Indian religion, that is largely known from the Epics and Buddhist canonical literature as well as early art.

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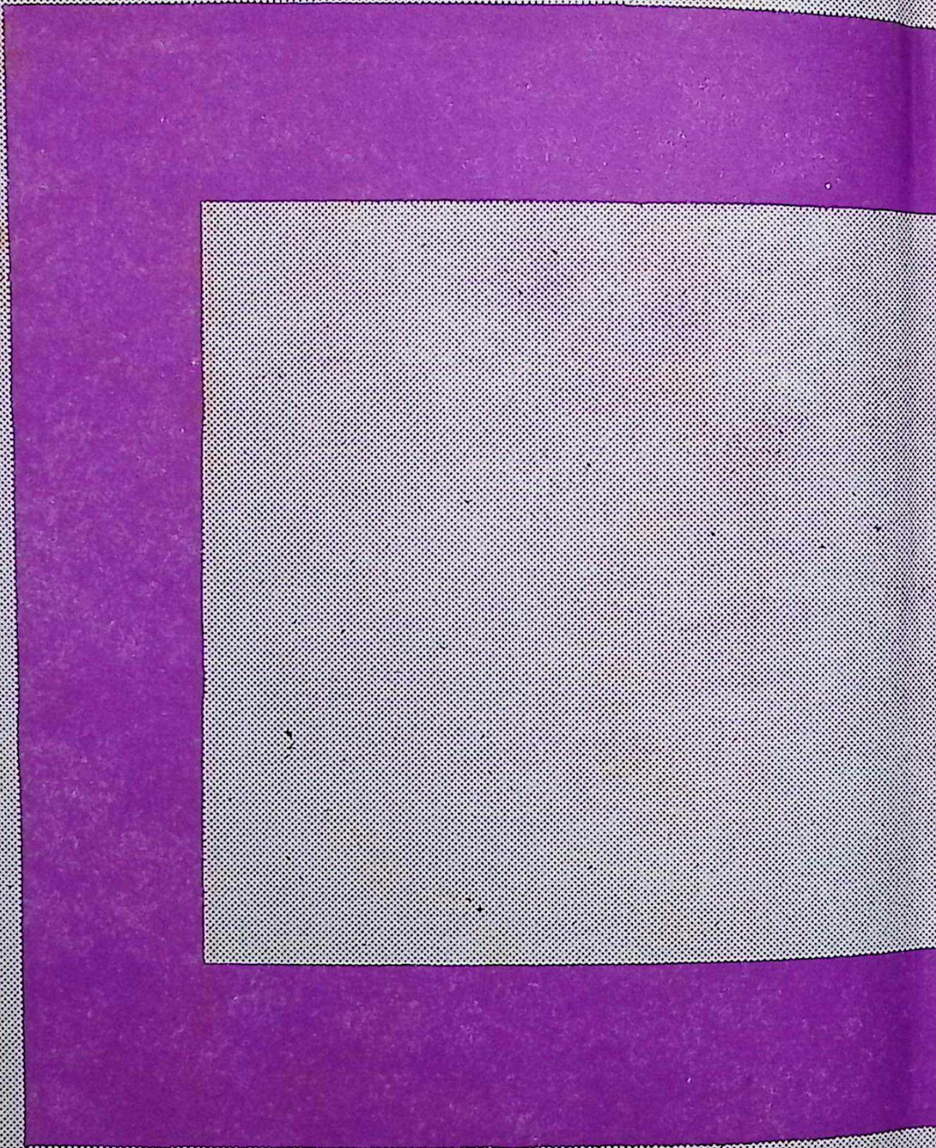

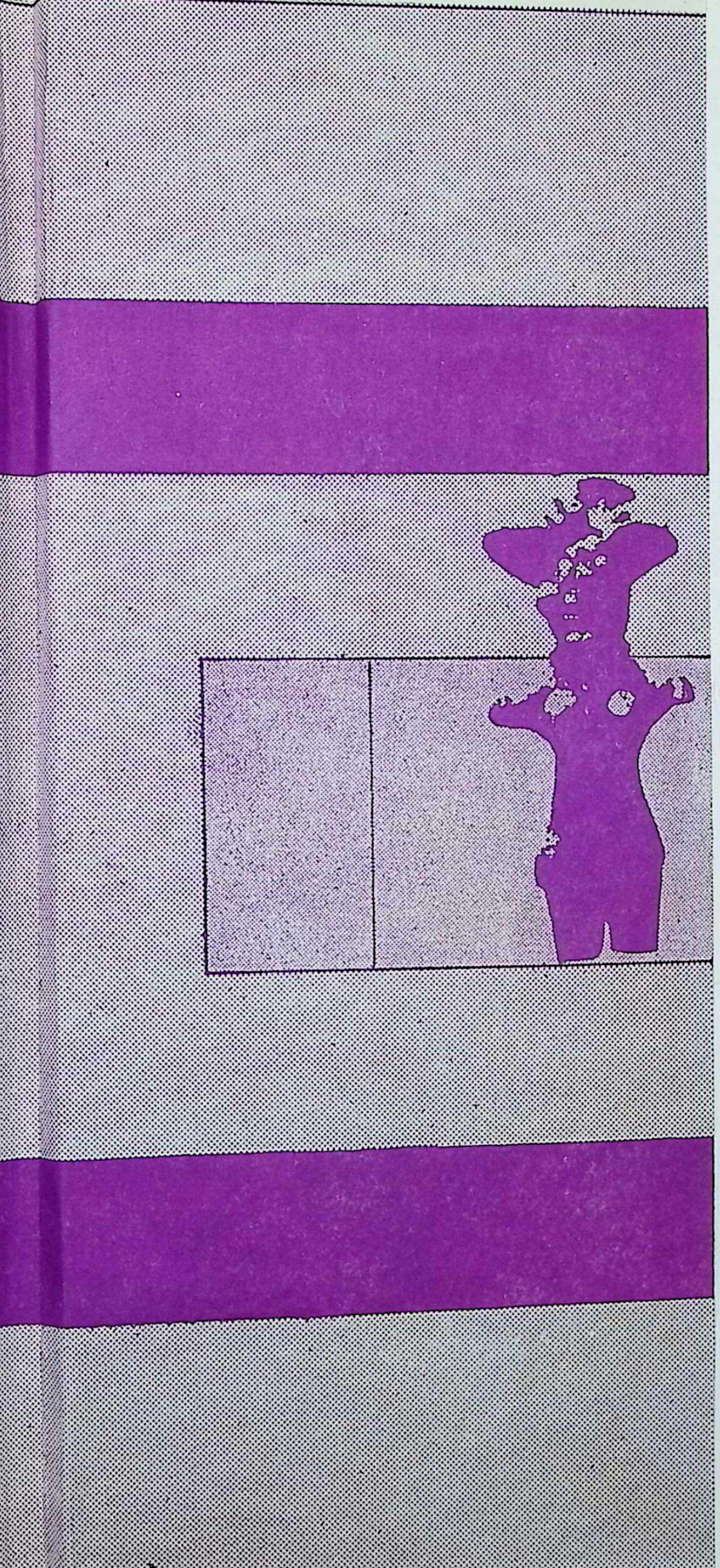

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